

# Rewind to a New Beginning

by DeafAngel2000

Category: H2O: Just Add Water  
Genre: Adventure, Friendship  
Language: English  
Characters: Charlotte W.  
Status: In-Progress  
Published: 2014-02-08 10:09:10  
Updated: 2016-04-19 02:46:47  
Packaged: 2016-04-26 17:44:32  
Rating: T  
Chapters: 29  
Words: 112,299  
Publisher: [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

Summary: It's been a year since Charlotte was a mermaid and is trying to redeem herself and fix her mistakes in Valencia, California. While trying to discover the meaning of friendship, she takes in a stray that saves her from a gang. What if, she's unconsciously drawn to a hidden cave one night and regains her tail, her old powers, and some new ones? First fic, please read!

## 1. Chapter 1

Hi. My name is DeafAngel2000 and this is my first H2O story. However, I won't be focusing on everyone's four favorite mermaids. Instead, I will be writing about the most hated mermaid on the show, Charlotte Watsford. Please read and don't judge Charlotte for what she's done on the show. Set back, your about to read a Charlotte story you ain't never seen before!

## 2. New Start, New Beginnings

"Charlotte! C'mon! The faster you bring in those boxes, the faster we can catch a break!" her mom, Annette yelled as she brought the last few boxes in to the house.

They had just moved into a new house ALL the way across America. From Atlanta, Georgia to Santa Clarita, California, no less. Well, while her mom works in Los Angeles, as a chief in a small, but popular restaurant, they were living in Valencia, Santa Clarita, a county in California. And, to be honest, she's glad to be so far away since...

Charlotte shook her head. Though she knew she couldn't forget what happened in Australia, she would try to change herself, personality speaking, and start fresh.

\_Well, this is my new life\_, she thought. Then, her mom came in from

the kitchen.

"Well, isn't this great? Here we are, living in a beautiful house that's a short ride to the beach, the mall, or wherever you teenagers go," she said as she hugged her, "Listen, I got a call from my boss and I have to get going. Do you mind if I leave you here?"

Charlotte shook her head.

"Well, Thanks." Her mom grabbed the keys and headed to the car. "I'll pick something up on the way home! Feel free to roam around!" her mom said as she went out the door. Charlotte waited until the sound of the car's engine was far in the distance.

She looked around the 2-story house. It had 2 bedrooms upstairs and 1 bedroom downstairs, 3 bathrooms (meaning she has one to herself), a living room, a gourmet kitchen, and a small pool with a big, grassy in the backyard. She could see what her mom meant when she said it was the "American Dream House" when she brought it. Then, she went back into the living room, which happened to be full of boxes.

"Well, if your going to change yourself Charlotte, start learning to make yourself useful," she said to herself.

Immediately, she got to work. First, she put all the all the boxes into the room where they belong( meaning the kitchen boxes went into the kitchen, her boxes went into her room, her mom's boxes went into her room, and put all the bathroom stuff in hers and her mom's bathroom.) After that, she spent 3 hours unpacking EVERY SINGLE THING and putting it in order. Thank goodness the moving men brought and moved the furniture in early and already put them in the according rooms, so she had everything where it needed to go.

She looked at her watch.

5:30pm.

She's been busy. She looked around the house again. It barely looks like she just moved in. Looking at her watch again, knowing she still had a few hours left until her mom got back. She went upstairs and changed from her simple t-shirt and jeans to a long white, sleeve-less dress and white sandals. She made her long, red hair into a French braid and grabbed her sunglasses.

\_Well, I'm ready to go\_, she thought. She went downstairs, left a note on the kitchen counter, and left the house.

She boarded a bus at the bus stop on the corner and the driver said "Well, your new here, aren't ya?"

She nodded. "Yeah, I just moved in with my mom. She's gone at the moment so I'm doing a little exploring. What's the most popular place for teens to go?"

The driver laughed and said "Tell me your name and I'll drop you off at my favorite site personally." She smiled. "Charlotte Watsford," she said. The driver smiled and said "Take a seat, Charlotte, but beware the drive will be a little long and out of my jurisdiction." Charlotte nodded and sat down.

An hour later, the driver yelled "CHARLOTTE WATSFORD!"

The bus was empty, except for her and the driver. So, she got up and went to him.

"Here's your stop, now I got to go. Be here at 9 so I can pick you up, O.K.?"

"O.K." she said. As she got off the bus, the driver said one more thing.

"Hey Charlotte?"

She turned to him.

"Yeah?"

He grinned.

"Welcome to Paradise Cove."

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Alright this is the first official chapter of my story and I need a few ideas. But I need to clear something:<strong>

\*\*1. Charlotte being a mermaid is the key part of this story.\*\*

\*\*2. The dog will still be a Pit-bull Terrier.\*\*

\*\*3. There is NO pairing. This story is about her redeeming herself and fixing her mistakes. So, she doesn't need a guy to date. (POWER TO FEMINISM!)\*\*

\*\*4. In this story, Charlotte gets to keep her tail and power, permanently. SPOILER!\*\*

### 3. A Strange Day At The Beach

As the bus rode away, Charlotte looked at the beach. It was a defiantly looker, and strangely familiar, but she had to find out where she was. Suddenly, she spotted a restaurant called the "\_Paradise Cove Beach CafÃ©". \_She sighed and went into the cafÃ©. The theme of the restaurant looked like something out of a beach hang out in the movies. The place was packed. Everyone was either sitting inside the restaurant or sitting outside enjoying the sun.

"NEXT!"

Charlotte jumped. She didn't realize that she had stepped in line. In front of her was an old woman, probably younger than her grandmother. Her grayish-black hair was in a messy bun, her skin didn't have any wrinkles but was baby pink, and had deep blue eyes that looked like she's seen the beginning of the world and everything since. She was wearing an apron, had a pen and notebook in hand, and was looking up at her expectantly.

"Well, what are you ordering?" she asked. Charlotte looked around in her dress pockets and realized that she left her wallet. At home.

"Oh! I am so sorry. I don't have any money, but I was wondering if-"

"Leave," the woman said sternly.

"But-but I need to know where I am and-"she started.

"Where you need to go is out of this restaurant and come back with money!" the woman whispered angrily. Charlotte knew it was a losing battle, but that didn't stop her from grabbing the woman's arm as she tried to leave.

"Just listen to me!" Charlotte exclaimed. The woman looked her right in the eye and suddenly... everything faded.

Water. Water was the first thing she saw. The sand and the corals stayed in place as the fish passed by. Fish? She then realized that she was under water. But how was she breathing? She looked down and saw that where her feet should be, it was a tail. A TAIL?! She gasped. Hadn't she already learned her lesson already? But this tail was different. Instead of the copper-orange tail her old one used to be, this one was bluish-red color and it seemed to sparkle a little. How was that possible?

Come.

She heard a voice. A feminine one. It sounded so old, yet so young and soothing at the same time.

Come to me, my precious Charlotte.

Suddenly, she had the urge to swim. Then, she did. She was a little out of practice since it's been a year since she had a tail. Suddenly, she was moving through the water at ease. She soon found herself swimming really fast, like she was swimming at the speed of light like there was nothing to stop her at all! Oh how she didn't even realize how much she missed being a mermaid!

Come to me, my sweet precious Charlotte.

She didn't need any more encouragement. She swam to the voice she, for some strange reason, instantly loved so much. She swam with an open heart, as if her life depended on it.

Come...

\* \* \*

><p>She woke up the moment cold water hit her straight in the face.<p>

"Brendan! What did I tell you?" a strong, stern voice yelled.

"Easy, wake anyone whose been frozen by Gram's up with cold water," a young voice said cockily.

"Why you little-"

"STOP! She's awake!"

A female voice said. Charlotte opened her eyes and looked up. A man who looks about in his mid 30s looked down at her. He had black hair, tan skin, and eyes the color of night. He had a big built and looked at her sternly. Beside him was a slender-looking boy, probably around 13, who was holding a bucket and grinning in amusement. He also had tan skin, but brown eyes and shaggy brown hair. The woman looked just like the boy and was really pregnant. She was looking at her in concern and relief.

"Honey, are you alright?" she asked.

"She wasn't turned to stone, so I give her the O.K.!" the boy said, giving her a thumb up. The man scolded him.

"Brendan, this is no time for jokes who knows what she saw!" Wait? What does he mean about 'what I saw'?

The woman turned to them and said "Hush you two!" and turned towards her, "are you alright?" Charlotte nodded.

"Yeah, I'm a little\_ wet," \_she said, referring to Brendan\_, \_"from the splash but its all good. Who are you?" she asked. The woman introduced herself.

"I'm Karen and this is Jonathan," she gestured to the man, "my husband, and this is Brendan,'" she gestured to the boy who gave her the peace sign.

"'Sup." Karen rolled her eyes.

"He's my son AND MY PRIDE AND JOY!" she said as she started to kiss him on the cheeks.

"Moooommm," the boy whined. Charlotte smiled at them.

\_They must be close\_, she thought. Then, she heard a cough and turned around.

Charlotte swore her heart stopped.

It was the old woman, only her hair was down and was wearing what looked to be a nightgown. Charlotte tried to get up, but realized that she was on the floor. So, she stood up and faced her. Karen stopped kissing Brendan and introduced her.

"This is my mother, Laguna. Mom this is..."

'Charlotte. Charlotte Watsford, "Charlotte said. She held up her hand for a handshake, which Laguna reluctantly shook. Suddenly, she remembered something. She turned to Karen.

"I have two questions. 1. Where am I? And 2. How long have I been out?"

"You were out for 30 minutes and you're in Malibu, sweetie, and our office," she answered. Malibu? No wonder this beach felt familiar.

She's seen enough movies and shows to know what it looked like.

"Well, I'd love to stay and chat, but I got to get going," she said as she was walking out the room. Suddenly, her stomach growled.

Karen laughed and said "Well, right after you eat first." Charlotte nodded in embarrassment.

The restaurant was less crowded and the family made her some to-go box of salmon burgers, macadamia coconut shrimp, some fries, a seaweed salad, much to Brendan's disgust, and a coke. After thanking the family many times, she was about to leave when Laguna stopped her outside the restaurant.

"I just wanted to... apologize for the way I acted earlier. I should have just answered your questions." She turned to leave when Charlotte stopped her.

"Wait! When I touched you, I had a ... you know, never mind. I'll just be on my way." She started to leave when she heard her asked "Was it like a dream, only it felt like something more?"

Charlotte turned around. "Yes."

"Then tell me what it was about," she said. It was like Charlotte was a spy and she needed to extract information from her. Charlotte was startled at her persistence, but told her what happened.

"I was under water, and I had... I had a tail, a bluish-red one and it sparkled. Then a woman's voice called me, telling me to come to her. For some reason, it felt like I had known and loved that voice for a long time, like it was my mom or something. I started swimming fast, like I was free from a prison or something. What does it mean?"

Though she thought she was going to get a straight answer, Laguna just shook her head, like she was told of a bad omen. "That reminds me of a legend, but I can't tell you now. Request me the next time you come and we'll talk." And with that, she walked away.

An hour later, Charlotte found herself standing at the edge of the pier. From a brochure she found, it said that it was 600 ft long in the 1980s, but a storm ended up damaging it, causing it to be 220ft long. The pier has a spectacular 360 degree view from Palos Verde to Point Dume, so you can watch the sunset. And it was living up to it. Though the restaurant looked beautiful at sunset, the view from the pier was amazing and if you lean close, you'll feel like you're on top of the world.

Suddenly, Charlotte saw a full moon on the horizon. She remembers the moon well. It was what had made her a mermaid in the first place and was the one that took her powers away. Not that she was mad about it. After the way she abused her powers like that, she had every right to lose them. And she was glad. She doesn't want to end up like that anymore. Not evil, but just ordinary. After all, ordinary is okay, right?

\_Come.\_

That voice again. It was calling her.

\_Come to me Charlotte.\_

And how did it know who she was?

\_Come\_...

She didn't realize she was doing it, but she started to climb on the edge of the pier. She looked down. Below her would be water if she jumped.

\_Come...\_

She saw the words \_NO JUMPING OR DIVING\_ spray-painted on the side of the pier.

\_Come...\_

\_...come\_

She jumped.

The water. Flowing water passed through her as she landed in it. It felt so...calm and relaxing, like it wanted her to be there. She missed the feeling.

\_Come...\_

She needed to go to that voice. She needed to be with it.

Beepâ€|Beep...

Something was wrong. She's not a mermaid anymore. She shouldn't be moon struck.

Beep...Beep...

\_Come...\_

No. She won't come. She won't be influenced. She won't be a mermaid. Never again.

She tried to open her mouth, but only water entered. She couldn't breath.

She...needed...oxygen.

BEEP...BEEP...

\_Come...\_

NO!

Charlotte rushed back to the surface. The moment fresh air hit her lungs, she swam back to shore. She looked at her now water-filled watch. 9:00pm. The bus was here and it possibly just saved her life. She quickly grabbed and put on her sandals, which she had left by a beach chair. She had to get there. She still felt the feeling of the

water. It was pulling her...killing her.

\_Had I just tried to drown myself?, \_she thought. Finally, she made it, but the driver was not happy.

"Where the heck were ya? Do you want to be left- why are you soaking wet?" he asked. She looked at herself. Her dress was so wet, it was almost see through. Her hair was drenched. And she lost her sunglasses. The only good thing that she wasn't wearing any makeup or else it would have smeared.

"I fell."

As pathetic as that sounded, she got on the bus. The driver handed her a towel.

"Well, since you're alright, I'll just take you to the mall next time. O.K.?" She looked at him. Part of her wanted to yell at him for leaving her at an unknown place. But he kept his promise to come back for her.

She smiled and said "O.k." as she sat down and dried herself. Because this was the new Charlotte, a girl who won't hold grudges over others.

As the bus started to ride off, no one noticed an old woman standing in the middle of the road, watching it drive off.

"So, it's her that she wants. Oh no."

\* \* \*

><p>As soon as Charlotte got off the bus, the first thing she did was run into the house, change out of her wet clothes and take a shower before her mom got home.<p>

30 minutes later, her mom walked in the door with a bag of Mexican food in her hand.

"Honey?" she asked as she wondered through the house. Annette was amazed at how clean up the house was. It was like they hadn't just moved in. She found her daughter watching TV in the living room, her back facing her.

"Hi honey," she said as she shoved the bag in Charlotte's face.

She laugh and said "I'm sorry I'm late, I was doing a little site seeing, what did you do while I was gone?" Charlotte shrugged her shoulders.

"Nothing much, just unpacked the boxes and stuff." Her mom smiled.

"I see that. Normally, you would just place the boxes in the rooms they go in, now you're unpacking them?" she hugged her, "what would I do without you. I'm going to go take a shower, while you eat. Is that O.K.?" Charlotte turned to her mother.

"Mom, I might almost be an adult, but you don't have to ask for my permission all the time. You can do what ever you want, just don't



drink or do drugs." The mother and daughter laughed as her mom went to take a shower.

This is the new Charlotte: useful, forgiving, responsible, hilarious, and loving. For some reason, she felt a boulder of burden lift off her.

So, \_ this is what it feels like to be a new person\_, she thought, \_this feels great\_...

But that night, wasn't anything but pleasant. As Charlotte tossed and turned all night in her, a feeling of restlessness coming over her.

\_Come.\_

Her eyes popped out wide open and she sat straight up. That voice wasn't calling to her. It was like it haunting her, like a ghost. All the love it had been gone, only horror. Part of her wanted to find that bus driver and demand him to take her to Paradise Cove this instant. But she didn't. Her first day of school was tomorrow, and since it was her last year of high school, she hoped to keep her life as normal as possible. She hoped.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Alright, now this is the 2nd official chapter of Rewind to a New Beginning. Wow, Charlotte met a lot of new people today. So, in case you caught what I did with the old woman standing in the road part, what do you think is up with Laguna and who is this "she" that she mention and why is "she" calling out to Charlotte ? IT'S NOT URSULA, IF THAT WAS WHAT YOU'RE THINKING! Just something far more sinister. The next chapter is about Charlotte's first day of high school as a senior. SPOILER! I HAD TO GIVE HER A BAD DAY FOR CHAPTER 5 AND LET'S SEE WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO HER AFTER SHE LEFT AUSTRALIA AND WHY.<strong>

\*\*READ & REVIEW!\*\*

#### 4. VHS, A Place For A Girl, Unlike Me

\*\*This chapter is about Charlotte's first day of senior year at Valencia High School( an actual school). I'm thinking of putting her in 5 different activities: art program, softball team, swim team, debate team, and/or choir. I want you guys to choose which one you want her to be in( it can be more than 1 and only these 5 activities). This story is in her POV. One last thing: NO HATING ON CHARLOTTE!\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Charlotte's POV<strong>

Beep! Beep! Beep! Bee-

Smack!

I woke up and looked at my alarm clock. 8:30am. I groaned.

\_I'm still on the Georgia time zone, \_I thought as I sluggishly got out of bed. You see, while it's 6:00 in Georgia, it's 5:30 in California. But even with the 30 minute time difference, I still had to take a shower before 7 or else I wouldn't have enough time to do my hair, which has grown a lot over 12 months. Still feeling sluggish, I hauled myself out of bed, only to hit the floor.

\_Ouch!, \_I thought.

Though I was still groggy, the fall gave me enough energy to walk into the bathroom. As I turned on the shower to warm, I discarded my night-clothes and got in. At first, I suddenly felt dizzy, like I was about to faint and pass out. Thinking it was just the water and my head, I shrugged it off and continued to wash my body. Then, right as I was in the middle of washing my hair, I heard \_it\_.

\_Charlotte...\_

I froze. Where is this voice coming from?

\_Come back to me Charlotte...\_

"It's all in my head, it's all in my head, it's all in my head..." I muttered as I quickly finished washing my hair and turned the water off.

I waited. And waited. And waited. The voice didn't come back and I shuddered.

"Freaky," I muttered. After putting on my bathrobe, I went to the sink and did my morning ritual: brushing my teeth, washing my face, blow-drying my hair, and etc. After that, I went into my bedroom and changed into my school clothes I brought from my closet: a red, long-sleeve plaid shirt with a white t-shirt underneath, ripped denim jeans, and white vans. Then, I spent a few minutes putting my hair into a braid that slung over my shoulder **\*\*(Elsa's "Let It Go" braid)\*\***. I looked at the time. 7:30 AM. \_Good, \_she thought, \_ I still have 30 minutes to eat.\_ With that, I grabbed my leather satchel and left her room.

"Mom," I said as I stuck my head into my mother's bedroom. Empty. There was evidence that my mom had been here, like the smell of her shampoo and the bathroom door opened. But her bed was made and her work stuff were gone. So, I assumed she was in the kitchen making breakfast, assuming she brought groceries.

"Mom?" I asked as I entered the kitchen. She wasn't there, but I found a McDonald's pancake platter with a note attached to it. I opened it and read:

\_\*\*Charlotte,\*\*\_

\_\*\*I'm sorry I couldn't be with you for your first day of school, but the boss called me in , saying my presence was needed at work early. I brought you some pancakes if you got hungry.\*\*\_

\_\*\*Love you,\*\*\_

\_\*\*Mom\*\*\_

I sighed. I know her job was important and all, heck, at the moment, it was what kept a roof over our heads, but couldn't she have waited to see me before she left? I sighed again and started to eat my breakfast, no matter how much it needed to be reheated.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>3rd POV<strong>

By the time the bus came, Charlotte was already outside, enjoying the early, orange morning sky\*\*. \*\*As the bus pulled up, her eyes widened to see who was driving as she got on. It was the bus driver from yesterday.

"You drive school buses too? What else don't I now about you?" she asked. He winked.

"This is during the week and my name's Phil," he said humorously, "hey, I wanted to apologize for leaving you in Malibu un-expectantly. No hard feelings?"

Charlotte waved her hand. "Don't worry; I actually had a great time there. But, next time, could you take me to a mall or something that's close to the beach next time?" The bus driver, Phil, nodded.

"Sure, and welcome to Valencia High." She smiled and took her seat. Sitting next to her was a black girl with thick, black hair and was wearing a blue, flower-print summer dress with 1 inch black stilettos. Her skin was caramel brown, but she had a tan that made her look a few shades lighter.

"Hi, I'm Charlotte. Charlotte Watsford," she said, offering her hand. The girl looked up and shook it. "I'm Alaine. Alaine Williams."

She nodded. "Nice to meet you."

Both girls smiled at each other. The two talked all along the ride and Charlotte was sure the day was starting off to a good start.

When the bus arrived at Valencia, almost immediately, everyone got off. Well, except for Charlotte. Phil wanted to talk to her.

"Hey, if you have any questions while your here, you can find me on any bus at any bus stop," he said, "and if when you're having a bad day, any day, I'll wait outside the school." She raised her eyebrow.

' 'Don't you have to drive other kids around?"

"I'm free at lunch," he said.

"Well, next time, can you leave me near the Paradise Cove mall next time?" she suggested. Phil nodded.

"Charlotte! Come on!" she heard Alaine exclaim from outside the waved goodbye and headed towards the school.

She had to admit, she was a bit star struck by the site of the campus\*\* (look on my profile and click on the link for Charlotte's school)\*\*. Thankfully, Alaine gripped her hand and dragged her to the inside of the school.

"Come on!" she said, "we have to get to the bulletin board before the Seniors get there!" Before she could ask her what she meant, they finally made it to what seemed like the center of the school.

There was a large bulletin board with tons of flyers and event notices on it.

"Quick! Take out a pen and sign up for something before the seniors come and take up everything!" Alaine said as she searched through her backpack for a pen. Charlotte started to do the same thing and asked "Why do we need to sign up for something?"

"The seniors are trying to start taking over the extra curricular activities since, instead of doing these things over their 4 YEARS here, they're in a rush to do stuff to add to their many list of achievements to put on their resumes. Those idiots." Before Charlotte could retort to that, Alaine pushed her to the board. As she looked at it, some of the fliers said:

**\*\*HAVE A LOVELY VOICE? JOIN THE VALENCIA HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR! TRYOUTS ARE ON FRIDAY 9TH FROM 5:30PM-6:30PM!\*\***

**\*\*GOT A GOOD KICK? COME TRYOUT FOR THE LADY VIKINGS SOFTBALL TEAM? ON TUESDAY 13TH, SAME TIME AS CHOIR TRYOUTS! SEE YOU THERE!\*\***

**\*\*HAVE AN ARTISTIC GOOD EYE? HAVE SCHOOL SPIRIT? BE OUR NEXT ARTIST TO PAINT OUR NEXT SCHOOL MURAL! SUBMIT YOUR ENTREES TODAY AND BE THE WINNER WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN JANURARY!\*\***

**\*\*LIKE TO FEEL THE ADRENALINE RUSH IN THE WATER? JOIN THE VALENCIA SWIM TEAM ? NEXT WEEK ,SAME DAY AND SAME TIME AS CHOIR TRYOUTS!\*\***

**\*\*ARE YOU A VOICE OF REASON? READY TO FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS? JOIN SPEECH & DEBATE TODAY! WE ARE FREE TO WALK-INS!\*\***

\_WOW,\_ she thought, \_I can see why Alaine was in a hurry. The activities here are PRICELESS!\_ Unsure of what to choose, Charlotte quickly signed up for the activities that sounded great for her.

RRRRIIIIIINNNNGGGG!

Lunch.

Never in her whole life has Charlotte ever been thankful to get food in her stomach. The day had not been so pleasant to her, at all.

After signing up for the activities, Alaine found out she was a senior when she looked at her schedule, she simply rejected her like yesterday's trash, saying that she 'lied' to her, when she simply didn't ask her. Then, during Math, her first class, her teacher called her to write an equation on the board, and some guy thought it was funny to stick his foot out, causing her to fall face flat on the

floor, which resulted to a trip to the nurse's office. This caused her to be tardy to her next class, English. And during P.E., the same guy who tripped her, and got detention for it, thought it was fun to use her as a target during a game of dodge ball. Now, she was so sore that her skin was visibly red from the hits.

After paying for my lunch, she decided to eat at a secluded table in a corner far away from the rest of the student body.

Today wasn't her best day after all. While she was walking to her seat, she spotted Elaine sitting down with two other girls. One was a Hispanic girl with beautiful black hair and the other was a blond that reminded her of... Lewis. Only, she was a girl and had her hair in a ponytail and had on wide glasses. They looked like they were good friends, like a sisterly bond that she had yet to understand. Heck, they even had matching bracelets. She'd never seen a bond like that since... since she met Cleo, Emma, and Rikki.

Though it's been a year since the 'mermaid' ordeal, 12 months to be exact, since she left in the middle of the year. She couldn't even explain how unbelievably sorry for the way she treated everyone. After she gave back the necklace to Lewis, her mom had sold her restaurant and met some guy, who is now her boss, who gave her a job in America. This resulted into a job transfer to the States. Since then, she never knew where she stood with anyone. She felt guilty about what she did. From stealing Lewis, to using her powers to harm the girls, even going as far as trying to take their powers away.

After that, she became depressed. So far that...one day, she was just going to take a nap after she had come back from school and the next day, she found herself waking up in a hospital with her mom laying next to her, her eyes tear-stained. She told her that when she came to check on her, she barely had a pulse. It turned out that, in a way, she was starving herself and her stomach was practically empty. And to make it worse, she didn't remember how it felt.

When she talked to her doctor, he asked her what caused her to almost commit suicide. Charlotte knew she couldn't tell him without exposing Mako, so she told him she was having a hard time, in life. After four months of feeding tubes inside her, she was released with a prescription for anti-depressant pills.

Charlotte didn't realize she was crying until she felt something land on her hand. She looked down and saw the wetness glisten from her hand. Wiping her tears away, she grabbed her half-eaten lunch and threw it away as she rushed out of the cafeteria. She went to find a teacher and tell them that she didn't feel good. Well, that didn't need anymore encouragement.

Her eyes were puffy, her skin was red, along with her skin turning pale, and she had a churning sickness in her stomach. The teacher wrote her a pass and wished well. But she wasn't going home. She threw the pass away and headed off campus to find Phil. She wanted to leave. Her mom told her to never run away never run away from her problems. But now wasn't an option. She was about to waste probably countless hours trying to find him... but there was no need. She saw Phil leaning on the side of the bus, waiting for her.

"Hey, Miss Red Skin. There's no malls near Paradise Cove, but that

doesn't mean you can't have a good time, right?" he said, "So, you ready to go?"

**\*\*Okay, this is the end of Charlotte's first day of Senior Year at high school. Despite was seems wrong, c'mon, everybody has bad days. So, what activities should Charlotte go for? I have a poll on my profile, letting you have a choice on what she's going to do. Read and review!\*\***

## 5. I Find a Guard and a Friend

**\*\*Okay, this is the 4th official chapter of RtaNB! This is also the story where the dog comes in, and let me tell you, this is one smart dog. So smart, that he plays a role in Charlotte's 'transformation', if you now what I mean ^\_- !\*\***

\* \* \*

><p>Well, they did go to the mall, but it was on short notice. The principal called Phil in, telling him to come in since there was a transportation issue with the football team.<p>

"Well, looks like I can't take you to the beach, how about a mall near by your place," he suggested. Charlotte thought for a moment. They didn't have enough time to go to beach. So, why not?

"Know any good malls nearby ?" she asked.

"I suggest the Town Center Mall. It's a few minutes from your place and has a ton of clothing stores and restaurants. Do you have any cash on you?"

She nodded. As much as she was knew she didn't want to admit it, she had worked tons of odd jobs and being a good negotiator that she was , sort of, she made \$3-400 and that was on her debit card.

"Yeah, I have enough. Don't wait for me, I'll get my mom to pick me up or I'll come up with something," she said. Then, he dropped her off at the front of the center. As she got off the bus, he said "Good luck and if the slightest thing goes wrong, call 911." Charlotte rolled her eyes.

"Yes dad."

Phil snorted as he started the engine and drove off.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Charlotte's POV<strong>

When I entered the mall, I honestly that the size didn't matter. The Cinema movie theater was the first place I wanted to go, but I decided against it. I might have come here to avoid my disastrous day at school, but I needed to get some other things. But as I walked past jewelry booths, toy stores, and small clothing departments (\_ Note to self, go to various boutiques for prom dresses,\_ I thought), I was just starting to underestimate the size until I found a Walmart! I mean, in a mall, a store as big as Walmart usually had its own building. But, now I can see why the mall is so big. It houses

one of the most popular stores in the country. Suddenly, I remembered that the refrigerator at home was empty. I smirked. This could be fun.

\* \* \*

><p>"That will be \$150.27, plus \$37 for tax," the woman at the cash register said. I brought out my credit card and paid for it. The woman smiled.<p>

" Have a nice day," she said as I walked out of Walmart with a basket full of groceries. I had to admit , I did the best I when it came to grocery shopping. When your single parent is a chief, you always have to be one step ahead of them. And by that, I mean , I had gotten half the stuff that was on my mom's grocery list:

#### 1. Vegetables

2 onions

2 pineapples

6 potatoes

6 bags of broccoli florets

8 bell peppers

#### 2. Fruit

1 box of strawberries

5 apples

10 lemons and limes (5 each)

3 bananas

3 oranges

#### 3. Meat

1 lb. of ground beef

steak

bacon

#### 4. Dairy

2 gallons of Milk

1 carton of eggs

butter

flour

sugar

5 spices ( varies)

cheese ( mixed)

## 5. Beverages

Coca Cola

Lemonade

1 pack of water

This only made up half the basket and I needed to go shopping. So, I decided to go to what seemed to be a new store and they just happened to have a few boxes lying around. The manager gladly let me use the boxes to pack the groceries in and even told me to leave the boxes inside the store until I had to only thing that surprised me was that no one seem to questioned my age, but then again, I'm almost 18. So, I almost look like an adult. Later, I decided to look around some more. The Walmart wasn't the only big store here. There was a L.A. Fitness, Abercrombie & Finch, Filene's Basement, and other stores. I looked on a pamphlet and read the mall's history. It turns out that when 2013 comes \*( I looked to see when season 2 aired and it was from 2008-2009. So, the time period here is 2009-2010) \*\*it marks the 100th anniversary. And since then, it's expanded.

\_Grrrr...\_

I looked down at my stomach. \_I must've not eaten enough lunch at school\_, I thought. I sighed to myself and went outside.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>3rd POV<strong>

The moment Charlotte stepped out side, the sun was blinding and burning. She had also forgotten how hot California could get during the day. So, she took off her plaid shirt and wrapped it around her waist, exposing her t-shirt and her now de-redden skin. She started to walk along the sidewalk, partly people-watching as she saw others taking and enjoying others company, partly rushing to find the food court. Then, she saw a big sign that said "\_FOOD PAVILION\_" on top of a big opening in between two buildings. She went to have a look and her mouth widened.

The food court was outside.

\_Grrrr...\_

Her stomach growled again and she complied. As she walked into the pavilion, she noticed the different types of food stands there. There was Taco Bell, KFC, McDonald, Wendy's, and a lot more. Though, she was more than delightful when she found her favorite restaurant , Veggieland \*(Sue me if you don't like the name. Being the daughter of a chief, you are more likely to eat healthy). \*\*She loved that restaurant. It was her mom's boss's idea to promote healthy food to kids. It sort of works like McDonald with the toys, but instead of promoting fast food, it was healthy food, the menu was courtesy of her mom. Though the age level was supposed to be from 12 months to 10 years old, everyone liked it so much that even teens and adults came,



even Charlotte. Though the restaurant was really a small food stand like the others, it did not disappoint.

As she walked up to the stand, she reached for her wallet and it fell to the ground, with the contents spilling out, credit cards and everything.

Darn! she as she got down. As she was picking it up, somebody stooped down and started to help her.

When they were done, she wasn't looking at the person until she heard the person ask "Are you alright?"

She looked up, she saw a tan guy with black hair and bluish purple eyes, probably a birth defect. He looked like a surfer since he was wearing baggy shorts and a tight, navy blue t-shirt. Charlotte nodded.

'Yeah. Thanks for helping me.'

The guy held out his hand. "No sweat, no problem. I'm Jason."

She shook his hand. "'Charlotte.'

She gave him a small smile. She didn't want to be rude, but she just wanted to get her food and leave. She wasn't interested in anyone, but by the smile Jason was giving her, he was definitely interested in her.

'Well, as much as I would love to chat, I sort of hungry.' She was trying to give him a hint to leave her alone, but he thought the opposite. Instead, he got out his wallet.

'How about I pay for your lunch and we could sit with my buddies  
'

It wasn't a suggestion, but almost an order. She sighed.

This was bad.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Charlotte's POV<strong>

After he paid for my deluxe veggie burger, apple fries, carrots and a side of water - I'm not a vegan but I just so happen to love veggie burgers- Jason grabbed my tray and led my to his friends. Most of them were older guys, probably in their twenties.

'Hey guys, look who's dining with us?' he said as we sat down.

"Charlotte, this is Jonas," he pointed to a tall Latino,

'Devin," he pointed to a tall black guy,

'Marick," he pointed to a blond who also had an athletic built,

'and my little brother, Jose,' he referred to a younger-looking

version of him. It wasn't till then that I realized that Jason was a little older than the rest. I started to slowly eat my food and kept my head down.

They had started talking like I wasn't there until I heard a gruff voice asked ''So, what school are you attending?''

I looked up to see that it was Devin who asked.

''I just started going to Valencia High today,'' I said. Suddenly, they all stopped talking and looked at me.

''So, your 18?'' Jose asked.

I shook my head and said ''I'm still 17,'' I said. I didn't notice Jason's hand on my pants until I felt his hand ride up a little \_too\_ close to my pant's zipper. I instantly got up from my seat. The guys now stared at me, their once calm eyes were now hungry, like a pack of wolves that had found their next meal.

Me.

So, I did the most logical thing to do...

I bolted.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>3rd POV<strong>

As Charlotte sprinted out of the pavilion and ran onto the unusually empty sidewalks, she listened for footprints if they were running after her. She wanted to get back into the mall, not only to make sure Phil was there to pick her up, but to make sure she got witnesses. She was about to look to look back to check when...

WOOF!

She looked and saw a dog in front of her. It was a pit bull terrier, the ones that are used to guard junk yards. It had a coat of brownish-gold all over and white fur that followed from the bottom of its head to the belly. The ears were up, though side looked chipped off. And then she noticed the metal chain around its neck. Charlotte started to step back.

If a pit bull terrier had a chain around its neck, it must be bad, right?

But the dog didn't look interested in her, despite the angry look it had. She looked behind her and she swore her heart stopped, again. The guys from the pavilion were running towards her, and they did not look happy\*\*. (Excuse the language I'm about to use!) \*\*

''Get back here you little slut! We aren't done yet!'' Jason yelled as his friends spat out curses. She looked at the dog again.

The dog still had that angry look on its face, it was looking at her like it was saying ''\_What are you waiting for? RUN!'' \_And she did that.

WOOF! WOOF! Grrrr...

' 'AAAAHHHHH! ' '

Charlotte turned around and could not believe the site.

The dog was biting Jason's little baby maker. Jason looked like he was gonna pass out in pain and his friends were running away like little cowards.

And most of all, Charlotte didn't know if she should be screaming for help or laughing her ass off.

By the time the dog let go, Josh was running along to his friends, clutching his crouch tightly. She was about to walk away when the dog came running towards her. But instead of looking fierce, it looked really happy, with his mouth open and his tongue sticking out on the side.

You could always tell that when a dog was panting, it was also grinning like a fool. Unaware of what she was doing, she knelt as the dog came up to her and started licking her face.

' 'Hey, hey, ' ' she said as the dog stopped licking her and looked at her, ' 'I don't know why you're so happy. After all, you practically stopped that guy from having kids! ' '

The dog started to pout. Charlotte didn't know why she was talking to a dog to begin with, especially after it just committed a violent act a moment ago, but began to smile and ruffled him around his good ear.

' 'But, he and his friends would have done something\_ very\_ bad to me if you hadn't interfered. So, I forgive you. ' ' Then, the dog smiled, or she thinks it did, and licked her again.

' 'So, what are you? ' ' she muttered as she looked in between his legs. Then, she saw a penis.

Yep, the dog was a boy. Then, she came up with an idea.

' 'So, I'll make a compromise. If you can protect me from people like those guys, you can come live with me, only under some ground rules. How does that sound? "

After all, this dog saved her life. How else could she repay him, despite being an animal?

WOOF! WOOF!

Charlotte took that as a yes. Then, she took a look at his eyes. His eyes were brown, but not like his coat. They were caramel brown. Suddenly, she had a good name idea on what to name him.

"Also, I need to give you a name, not too violent and not too cuddly. Would you like the name Thomas? Your eyes remind me of a candy bar named Thomas... and that's the best name I can come up with. "

WOOF! WOOF!

She took that as a yes. Charlotte held out her hand and the dog, Thomas, put his paw on it and made her move her hand up and down, as if to be shaking her hand. \*\*(HAHA! My dog, Tiger, does the same thing too!)\*\*

"Thomas, this is going to be the beginning of a beautiful friendship."

WOOF! WOOF!

So, the two started to walk back to the entrance of the mall. And as Charlotte walked in, she didn't have to turn around. Because she knew that her new, trusty sidekick would still be there, waiting for her.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Well people, that is the end of my official chapter 4th, 5 if you count my introduction chapter. So, Charlotte brings Thomas into her life and , in my next stories, the companion who will help her through anything, even when she's a mermaid. I would normally put this in a separate chapter, but I'm going to ask: Are you guys avoiding reading my story because you guys hate Charlotte and she's not being mean to the girls or befriending them? <strong>

\*\*Because I feel that that isn't a good enough reason to not read. I feel that even if you are ready to give her a second chance, you can still at least try to understand that the guilt she had after season 2 was really and, despite being a fictional character, the person who played her showed something that the producer never showed: If Charlotte had a way to redeem herself and be REAL friends with the trio, which is all she ever really wanted but she didn't get it because she wasn't jealous or power-hungry, it was because..\*\*

\*\*A. Cleo might have been nice, but all she wanted was the guy that SHE let go !\*\*

\*\*B. Maybe if Rikki had even tried to actually be friends with her, or be nice in general, maybe Charlotte wouldn't had thought of using her powers against her like payback. \*\*

\*\*C. Emma was probably the only one who was ever truly nice to her. She wanted to be friends with her and help her control her powers, and if the other 2 had any sense, she could have had Max make a moon necklace for Charlotte and they ALL could have been friends.\*\*

\*\*D. Lewis, as much as you guys can disagree, also took part on how she went bad. If he had actually moved on and actually saw her, meaning not forgetting about her, for who she was , the thing might've not happen and, even if they were just friends, life could have been easier for all 5 of them.\*\*

\*\*E. They all, despite what you think, should have told Charlotte EVERYTHING the moment Cleo stole her diary, despite returning it, and Charlotte retaliating by stealing the video that showed that Gracie was a mermaid. In the situation, everyone should have learned that HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY! This all started with dishonesty and , as you saw the season 2, look what had happened!\*\*

**\*\*So, as much as it will bother you, stop hating on her because it wasn't her fault from the start. It was Lewis and the Trio's fault because, as reasons listed, they had hurt her feelings and what became of Charlotte was a result.\*\***

**\*\*This is the reason she fits my motto: The Bullies Are The Bullied and The Bullied are The Bullies. The supposed ''good guys'' turned her into the ''bad guy'' and she is now the most hated ex-mermaid in the show, BECAUSE OF THEM!\*\***

**\*\*Now, I'm done with my rant but I'll let you know that I will CONTINUE to write her story and, I WILL give her the happy ending she truly deserves. \*\***

**\*\*READ AND REVIEW!\*\***

## 6. Explanations and Second Days at VHS

**\*\*Here's is the 5th official chapter. Now, I want to say that the poll is officially closed and thank you for your votes. Honestly, until I saw the increasing votes on my poll, I didn't think anyone, but my followers, were listening, or reading my story to be exact. But, now I know that some people do to read, no matter how much they hate Charlotte. It when Charlotte and Thomas get picked back up and her second day of school. Read and review! And no offense, but PLEASE BE NEW READERS!\*\***

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Charlotte's POV<strong>

To make it clear: Phil was not so taken with meeting Thomas. Key word : NOT!

Thomas and I were sitting outside the main entrance of the mall, right where Phil had dropped me off. A pile of grocery-filled boxes next us and I was holding a Pet Smarts bag of dog stuff and a book about pit bull terrier. We must have looked like an odd pair because anyone who passed us on the way in gave us a funny look.

\_What? Haven't you ever seen a girl and her dog before?,\_ I thought.

That reminds me. I reached into the bag and pulled out a black collar with tiny spikes sticking out and it had "PROTECTOR" on it.

'Hey Thomas, do you like it?" I asked as I showed him the collar.

WOOF!

Approved.

I took out some scissors and started to cut the chain off from around his neck. I didn't realize how tight it was until I heard a CLANG! and the chain fell off. The hard part came when Thomas started licking me.

"Alright, alright, I get it,'" I said as I stopped him from licking

me, ''the leash was too tight on you.'' I put the chain in the bag and put the new collar on. And let me tell you, I swore he was posing afterward.

WOOF! WOOF!

''Your welcome,'' I said. While Thomas started to run around, I picked up the book I brought and started to read.

\_After all, since I now own a pit, I might as well read up on it,\_ I thought. I was halfway passed chapter one when I heard a...

BEEP! BEEP!

I looked up from my book and saw the school bus pull up. Thankfully, the bus was empty...except for Phil.

Crap! How am I gonna explain Thomas to him? The bus stopped in front of me and the doors opened. Phil was looking at her, mischief in his eyes.

''Wow, I knew you were going to do some shopping, but I see you got busy.'' He flashed me his trademark grin as he walked off.

''What did you buy?" he asked.

"Oh, just some groceries, but I put them in boxes so they'd be easy to carry," I said.

''Genius," he said.

He started picking up the boxes until he saw the book in my hand.

''Say, whatcha got there?" he asked as he snatched the book out of my grasp.

"You just move to California and your already thinking about getting a dog, and not a Chihuahua, a pit bull!" As he started to flip through the pages, I saw a silhouette of Thomas walking behind him.

Crap! I've got to distract him!

''Well, since I live in such a good neighborhood, I was thinking 'Yeah, let's get a dog!' and pit bulls and protective and fun loving'', she said as she rubbed the back of her neck. He gave the book back to me and started to pick up the boxes.

''Well, at least it's not a rat. Anyways, we should get this stuff on the bus before your parents get home,'' Phil said as started to pick up the boxes, he heard a growl.

''Was that your stomach?" he asked. I shook my head, until I realized that was the wrong thing to do. He turned around before I could even warn him and...

''AAAAHHHHHHH!''

\* \* \*

><p><strong>3rd POV <strong>

Charlotte would like to say everything went well and Phil and Thomas were best friends.

But the opposite happened.

Long story short: Thomas jumped on Phil, causing him the fall on the ground and hit his head. Charlotte quickly put a leash on Thomas and hauled him onto the back of the bus, where he remained as she helped Phil and the boxes onto the bus and rode home.

At the moment, she had given him an ice pack to put on his head while Thomas was outside, sulking.

"That's the dog you've got!" Phil ranted, "well, I can't believe he attacked me! What did I ever do to him?"

"Well, I was sort of chased by bad guys and he saved my life. So, I took him in," Charlotte explained. Phil looked at her, got up, and started to leave.

"I should probably leave now," he said, "put the groceries up and let him in when I leave, because you better have a good excuse to tell your mother why there's a dog in the house."

And she sometimes hated when people were right.

That evening, Annette nearly had a heart attack.

\* \* \*

><p><em>After Phil left and she opened the boxes and put the groceries away, she finally let Thomas back in. "Alright, I told you there were some ground rules and I expect you to follow them.<em>

\_Rule 1#: You must obey my every command, and that goes for my mom, sometimes.\_

\_Rule 2# : If you have to use the bathroom, not to talk to other dogs, but ONLY to use the bathroom, bark 3 times and stand at the door.\_

\_Rule 3#: You do not chew on the furniture or anything that is human stuff or else my mom will want to throw you out.\_

\_Rule 4#: You will NOT beg for food and only accept it when given to you.\_

\_Rule 5#: You can't tackle anybody unless I introduce you and give you the all clear.\_

\_Rule 6#: For Today and for a while , you must be nice to my mom, like getting the newspaper or something.\_

\_Alright, do we have a deal?" she asked.\_

\_WOOF!\_

\_Charlotte nodded. This should go well.\_

\_By the time her mom got home, her and Thomas were sitting in the living room watching TV.\_

\_"I'm home!" her mom yelled. Thomas ran to the door. Then, Charlotte's eyes widened in realization.. She forgot about her explanation. She ran to the door and was surprised, in a bad way.\_

\_Thomas was on top of Annette, licking her face off. \_

\_Suddenly, Charlotte said "Thomas! Rule 1#! Sit!" And like that, he got off of her and sat down. Annette use this as an opportunity to get up and looked at her, and boy was she mad. \_

\_'"Charlotte, you've got some explaining to do.'"\_

\* \* \*

><p>Thomas was put outside, again, after Charlotte explained what had happened. Well, her revised version of it, to spare Phil some trouble. Though Charlotte didn't find this a punishment, she had complete responsibility for the dog.<p>

Meaning, when she took him on walks, she pick up his little 'business' ; buy and feed him food, which might mean she needed a job; pay for his shots, which after a heated argument, Charlotte agreed to pay half the bill; and she must watch him 24/7, meaning that Charlotte had to take him to school, only a safe difference.

That night, while her mom was asleep, she let Thomas into the house and was quite comfortable with him sleeping by her feet. She stayed up all night on her computer looking for jobs that would hire her. After all, since she brought him in, she had to take care of him. But there were no jobs for hire. Sighing, she closed her laptop and set is aside as she went into a deep sleep.

\* \* \*

><p><em>There was a full moon in the dark sky.<em>

\_But something in the sea was not as peaceful as it was thought to be.\_

\_In a deep, dark cave at the bottom of the ocean, a voice was calling to her.\_

\_'"My, my, Charlotte, you've been a naughty girl haven't you. But no worries, I can excuse your crimes, for they were never really your fault. Let me show you what I can do, in honor of my special guest.'"\_

\_Suddenly, images passed her until she saw a vision.\_

\_Rikki, Cleo and Emma and their boyfriends were at the beach. While their boyfriends were sitting against the rocks, the girls were in their bikinis, looking at the water as if they were waiting for



something. \_

\_Or someone.\_

\_''Where is she?" Rikki asked as she looked at her watch.

\_

\_''C'mon, Rikki, she said she was going to be late. Her mom wanted her to do something and it was taking longer than usual,'' Emma reassured her friend. \_

\_''Alright , but if she's not here in a few minutes, we're going on without her,'' Rikki said.\_

\_"Hey!" \_

\_The girls turned around and saw Charlotte running towards them, wearing a white bikini with red, black and blue strips on it.\_

\_When she got to them she said ''Sorry I'm late. I had no idea that my mom wanted me to carry the fish to the restaurant. I swear trying to avoid touching water and running an errand at the same time is hard.'' Cleo came up and hugged her 'friend'. \_

\_''Don't worry, we waited for you. Now come on!\_

\_As the girls waved to the boys, Charlotte knew that Lewis and Cleo were together, but she felt as if he was looking at her.\_

\_Like she was something special...\_

\_Then, all 4 girls dived into the water, where they changed into mermaids and swam the sea.\_

\_Then, the vision ended and went back to the cave. \_

\_The voice said ''Well, isn't that a pleasant memory. Oh dear, I've seem to have forgotten, that never happened. But it would be nice for it to be, wouldn't it. Your wish to be friends with the legendary mermaids of Mako Island and to belong somewhere is so great that it's like a memory. But don't worry dear. When the time comes, I can make it possible. It would be like you never did anything to them.\_

\_''Now wake up. Your dog is washing your face with his tongue  
.''\_

\_The cave disappears and everything fades to black...\_

\* \* \*

><p>Charlotte woke up to find that Thomas was indeed licking her.<p>

''O.k., o.k., I'm up,'' she said as Thomas got off of her. She looked at her clock. 5:30am. Thomas woke her up an hour early.

''Well, at least I can get things done faster,'' she muttered as she got up. She went to the bathroom, took a shower, did her morning ritual, and came out to pull out her school clothes which consisted

of a red satin camisole top, a denim acid wash skater shirt, red all-star converse, a Swarovski slake crystal bracelet, and she let her hair down, covering it with a black beanie. After putting the attire on, she saw Thomas looking at her, with his leash in his mouth.

'Oh, you want to go for a walk?"

Thomas gave a soft bark.

'Alright,' she said as she put the leash on him. Grabbing her satchel, for when she needed it, she and Thomas left the house.

By the time they got back, her mom's car was gone.

"Well Thomas," she said to him, "this is my life." After taking his leash off, she washed her hands and made herself cinnamon toast with eggs and gave some bacon to Thomas.

'Rule 4# : Accept food only when given to you, no begging,' she said to him. But she was sure he didn't hear her, since he was too busy eating. A few minutes later, after she threw her breakfast away she heard the bus.

BEEP! BEEP!

Charlotte quickly grabbed her satchel and raced to the door, only to find Thomas there, leash in his mouth.

"Listen, I have to go! I'll see you later." Thomas moved out of the way as Charlotte ran outside to the bus.

As she got on, Phil asked "Did she take the news well?"

'Sort of, but I hold full responsibility for him if he does anything bad,' she said as she sat down. Phil laughed and the bus took off.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Back at the house...<strong>

Thomas watched as the door closed, he opened the back door with his paw and went into backyard. Though there was a medium size pool, there was also grassy part near wooden fence. He dropped the leash for a moment and began to dig a hole. When it was big enough, he grabbed the leash and squeezed through the hole perfectly. When he saw the bus pass, with the leash in his mouth, he started running after it. Thomas managed run up to the side of the bus, where a few kids spotted him.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>On the bus...<strong>

'Look! A dog!' someone shouted from the side of the bus. Charlotte's eyes widened and went to the other side to see what it was. Though she was hoped that it wasn't Thomas, she was wrong.

If Thomas was smiling, he definitely was when the bus stopped. As

Thomas entered the bus, he gave Phil a low growl before he sat next to Charlotte, who was a mixture of surprise and furious.

'What were you thinking? Did you want to get run over?!" she exclaimed.

But he still smiled at her. Charlotte sighed.

'Keep going, it's too late to take him back,' she said to Phil. He grunted and continued the ride.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Valencia High<strong>

Once everybody got off the bus, Charlotte tied Thomas to the nearest tree. '

"Alright, I'll be in the building," she pointed to the school," for a while. But when I came out, we're going to have lunch for a few minutes. Then, I' leave and comeback to go home. Understand?"

WOOF!

Charlotte smiled and went to school.

The commotion Thomas started had spread through the school. Now, everyone who saw Charlotte asked

'When did you get your dog?"

"Does he always follow you to school?" and, her personal favorite,

"Where did you get him?"

It seemed like Thomas ran after the bus on purpose. And it didn't get any better during her classes. During her classes, Thomas would barked for a hour until one of the teachers sent her outside to deal with him.

RRRRRRRIINNNGGGG!

Lunch.

Charlotte could finally be with Thomas. As she was heading outside, she bumped into someone. 'I'm so sorry-' Charlotte looked to see who she bumped into. Alaine. And behind her were her friends.

'Sorry, Alaine, I was trying to get to my dog-'

"Wait? That's your dog that's about to be taken by animal control? If I were you, I would stop them," Alaine said as she pointed to the door.

Charlotte didn't have time to thank her as she was rushing to Thomas. There was Thomas, but no animal control.

\_She lied to me\_, she thought as she walked towards Thomas.

The two eat in silence, Charlotte eating half of her sandwich while Thomas ate the other half. ''Do you think I'm a good owner to you?" she asked Thomas.

WOOF!

She took that as a yes.

Then, the bell rung again.

''Well, Thomas, I've gotta go. I'll see you in a few hours.'' As she got up, Charlotte felt a wave of energy hit her.

\_''Such an awful thing for her to do, huh. Make you think that your pet was being taken away. Just say the word and I'll fix it.''\_

WOOF!

Charlotte stumbled back. Who was that voice and why was it talking to her? She looked at Thomas, who was looking at her strangely. Shaking it off, she went back into the school, feeling a bit uneasy.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>End of the day...<strong>

As school ended, Charlotte went and untied Thomas.

"You've had a change in heart lately," she said as she untied him, '' you spared me your barking for the rest of the day and now your acting as if there's a problem.'' When she untied him, he started to bark. She looked behind her to see a woman standing behind her. Her hair was light brown and her eyes were emerald green. She was wearing a blouse and some jeans that looked GREAT with the high heels she was wearing.

''Thomas, it's Rule 5#,' ' she said to him,' ' this is my music teacher, Miss Analies.' '

Miss Analies was her music teacher and a sweet lady. ''Charlotte, it was good thing I could catch you, I was just wondering if you're joining choir?" she asked. Charlotte nodded. ''Well, at the auditions, you and all the others must wear a black shirts. Only solid black.' '

''O.k., I'll see you on Friday,' ' Charlotte said and turned to Thomas, ''Come on boy! By Miss A.' '

With that, the two got on the bus and went home.

\* \* \*

><p>By the time they got back, Charlotte found the whole that Thomas dug and covered it up before her mom found it. She played fetch with Thomas for an hour before she retired up to her room and doing her homework.<p>

'I'm home,' her mom said as she stuck her head through her doorway.

Charlotte was on her computer again, looking for a job. '

'What's up?" her mom asked.

'Nothing much, just job searching,' Charlotte said, not looking from her computer.

'Well... I guess I was a little harsh when I gave you full responsibility of Thomas, so, though everything else stays the same, I'll pay full for the shots.'

'O.k.," Charlotte said, still looking at the computer screen. She didn't look slightly interested.

'Alright, I brought pizza if you want it,' her mom said. When Charlotte didn't answer, she left.

The moment the door closed, Charlotte did a quick, silent happy dance. Though she still had to pay for everything else, she was glad to avoid paying for shots.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>That night...<strong>

While Charlotte was asleep and Thomas was on the floor, something murky was happening in the bathroom. Something dark rose up from the bathtub drain. It was completely made up of water, only it was black and murky. The water-like creature had vicious eyes and fangs dripping water. It slowly opened the door that led to the bedroom.

As it levitated over the bed, it looked down at Charlotte, who was peacefully asleep. She had no idea she was being watched. But she would later. There was a glow coming from it's eyes as it scanned her body, almost as if it was looking for something.

Grrrrrrr...

It turned and saw Thomas staring at him menacingly, as if to say

\_'Do something. Try it, I dare you.'\_'

The snake tentacle immediately retreated, closing the door and going back down the drain. But Charlotte didn't hear it. It was like nothing ever happened. But to Thomas, something did happen, and he spent all night watching Charlotte, scaring away anything that threatened to come near her.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Alright, this is the end to this <em>long<em> chapter. You've got to admit, Thomas is doing his job and and doing great at it. The next chapter is the choir auditions and I'll have to skip the whole school thing just to seek the anticipation.\*\*

**\*\*Read and Review!\*\***

## 7. Choir Wins and The Voice

**\*\*Alright, this is a new chapter ( I've stopped counting) and as you can see in the title. So, just in case some of you were wondering when all this takes place, it's in the middle of August, since she's just moving away from Atlanta, Georgia ( my hometown is in Riverdale!) And the reasons for the strange stuff is happening to Charlotte so quickly... well, that will be explained later!\*\***

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Friday morning...<strong>

BEEP! BEEP! BEE-

SMACK!

Charlotte hit her alarm clock and got out of bed. She had dried slobber coming down her mouth, her eyes were droopy, in a need-for-energy kind of way, and her hair was all over the place. The other night, she had finally pieced together a song that she could sing at choir auditions. She based it on her experience since Australia and her need, no, her want, to be normal. It really needed some work the other night and she was up until 12 in the morning when it was finally done. As she got out of bed, she immediately stumbled to the floor.

Ouch, she thought as she got up. She looked to see it was Thomas, who was too deep in a sleep that he didn't notice or feel her trip over him.

'Dumb dog,' she muttered as she went into the bathroom.

A few minutes later, she came back and put on her outfit for school and choir auditions : a black off-the-shoulder stretch-bandage top, a flower-print skirt, and leather boots. She put her hair in a ponytail after she curled it up. Thomas was up as well, despite that she was still mad at him. All last night, he was staring at her and the one time he did do something, he ruined her papers, chewing it all up. The two ate breakfast in silence, by meaning her giving him a glare and not giving him bacon.

BEEP! BEEP!

The bus came a few minutes later and, much to Phil's displeasure, she let Thomas get on the bus with her. People have started to get used to Thomas on the bus, but she let some people take pictures of him and/or give him treats occasionally.

**\*\*Fast forward to choir auditions...\*\***

The school day went by very fast. So fast that she didn't realize that it was time for choir auditions until Miss Analies spoke up at the auditorium.

'Welcome, students, to the Valencia High Theatre where you will be auditioning for the Valencia High School Choir,' she said with a

melodramatic voice, '' with everyone here, since there are 100 of you and only 50 of you will be selected, there will be two groups sorted by gender. Now, girls move to the left of the theatre and boys move to the right. Now!"

Everybody quickly moved to different sides, and to Charlotte's discomfort, she ended up sitting next to Alaine. She was wearing a black dress and her hair was in a baseball cap. She wanted to say something to her, but it wasn't worth it.

''Good, now I'll start with the girls. First up: Charlotte Watsford.''

**\*\*Charlotte's POV\*\***

Nervously, I got up and walked onto the stage. I looked at the crowd. Sure, I had no problem getting on top of a cliff and paint the view, but getting in front of people and singing was different. Their eyes were on me and I was slightly beginning to sweat .

\_Wow, so this is what stage fright feels like,\_ I thought.

''State your full name, the song you'll be singing, and the background,' ' Miss Analies said.

As I gave the music sheets to the band members to play, I looked out at the audience.

''My name is Charlotte Elizabeth Watsford and I will be singing a song I wrote called 'Help Me Find My Way'. This is based on an experience I had a while back, based on the fact that I wanted to be special. But, after learning the hard way, I learned that I'm okay being ordinary, but I still need help finding my way,' ' I said, feeling a boulder-like weight lift off me.

Though they won't know that I was a mermaid, they can at least see me in a somewhat different perspective.

Miss Analies nodded and motioned me to begin. I did a silent count to the band and the music began.

\_(Guitar and piano begins to play)\_

I took a deep breath and began to sing.

\_I don't understand\_

\_who I really am\_

\_I can't keep going on\_

\_round and round again\_

\_I've traveled so far\_

\_without looking back\_

\_But something's missing\_

\_something's just not right\_

I took another breathe and began to sing the chorus.

\_Chorus:\_

\_Where do I go\_

\_where do I stand\_

\_I feel like a lost child\_

\_with no hands\_

\_I am so unsure\_

\_so far from secure\_

\_I need you to help me find\_

\_help me find my way\_

\_( Ooohh haa.. ohhh yeah...Ohhhhhhh)\_

The audience was beginning to way side to side, even Alaine and Miss Analies.

\_Go slow\_

\_things take time \_

\_That's what they always say\_

\_(that's what they always say)\_

\_Sometimes, it gets way too rough\_

\_you just wanna hide away\_

\_For all the times\_

\_I break down and cry\_

\_Something's missing\_

\_something's just not right\_

\_Chorus:\_

\_Where do I go\_

\_where do I stand\_

\_I feel like a lost child\_

\_with no hands\_

\_I am so unsure\_

\_so far from secure\_



\_I need you to help me find\_

\_help me find my way\_

I saw everybody silently dancing and, feeling a little giddy-ish, I started to add a little soul into it. I let my ponytail down, letting my curly hair fall down to my shoulders and to the middle of her back.

\_Help me find my way \_

\_oh baby\_

\_Gonna stay strong\_

\_yeah gonna move on\_

\_With my life\_

\_that's what I'm gonna do\_

\_... oh...\_

I started to tone it down a little, almost like it was for a final finally.

Chorus:

><em>Where do I go<em>

\_where do I stand\_

\_I feel like a lost child\_

\_with no hand\_

\_I am so unsure\_

\_so far from secure\_

\_I need you to help me find\_

\_help me find my waaay... \_

I brought my voice back up again.

\_I feel like a lost child \_

\_with no hand\_

\_I am so unsure\_

\_and far from secure\_

\_I need you to help me find\_

\_help me find my way.\_

\_Where do I stand\_

\_I feel like a lost child\_  
\_with no hand\_  
\_I am so unsure\_  
\_and far from secure,\_  
\_I need you to help me find\_  
\_help me find my way...\_

The song ended with the last guitar note and everything fell silent.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>3rd POV<strong>

The whole room was silent. Charlotte shut her eyes tightly. To be honest, this was the very first time she ever sung at all; Unless you would count the times she would sing along with her late grandmother, Gracie Watsford.

Suddenly, the auditorium bursted into applause. She opened her eyes to see almost everyone standing up and giving her what seemed to be a standing ovation, and if she listened carefully, the boys were whistling at her. Even Alaine was clapping.

Miss Analies got up after quieting the students and said ''Though I do not normally do this so quickly, it seems that I have 49 girls left to accept. Congratulations, Charlotte, welcome to the Valencia Choir!''

Charlotte covered her mouth to avoid screaming. She did it. She got into the choir. Oh, her mom was going to pester her to death when she finds out.

\* \* \*

><p>After the auditions were over, Charlotte was changing outfits in one of the stalls in the girls' bathroom when she heard someone come in and slam the door. She quickly gathered her stuff and stood on top of the toilet. She wasn't much of an ease dropper, or at least the new Charlotte wasn't, but making herself known would make the situation either awkward or worse.<p>

''I can't believe you let THAT girl show you out like that, Alaine, and everyone here knows your the best!'' a feminine voice said. Charlotte looked through the crack in the stall's door and saw a black, middle-aged woman yelling at Alaine, who looked terrified, though she did her best to not let it show.

''Mom, I didn't even know she could sing like that! Besides, she's been her for what, a week?'' Alaine defended herself. Charlotte closed her eyes as quick as she could because she knew what was happening.

SLAP!

She opened her eyes again and saw Alaine holding her cheek.

'Don't talk back to me, little girl! And I'll have you know, not only did she just get recognition for her voice, she has gotten recognition for her dog! Didn't I tell you to call animal control on that beast?' Charlotte did her best not to gasp. That was her?

'I did, but they were busy," Alaine said.

'Well, try harder next time.' With that, her mom grabbed her roughly by the arm and dragged her out.

SLAM!

Charlotte sat there, not moving. After what she had just witnessed, she had one thing on her mind: They talking about her.

\* \* \*

><p>When she finally managed to leave the bathroom, she went outside and saw Phil standing beside his bus. She quickly untied Thomas and went to him.<p>

'Hey, I hear we have a new member of the choir. Congrats,' he said.

'What are you doing here?' she asked him.

'Easy, it's still daylight and I figured I could take you to Paradise as a reward,' he said.

'Thanks, but I want to try a new beach. I looked it up on Google and it's called Point Dume Nature Preserve at Point Dume State Beach. I want to check it out in case I want to paint there some time,' she explained.

'Alright, I'll take you there tomorrow afternoon and we'll see?'

'Deal.'

They all got on the bus and he dropped them off at their house.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Saturday afternoon...<strong>

'I can't believe that mangy mutt followed us halfway to Paradise. No, he ran beside the bus and kept up for an hour!" Phil ranted as he was checking out the busted tire and the engine.

He wasn't lying. Thomas was supposed to stay home for the day, but if that dog had any problems, it was staying away from Charlotte.

The Saturday morning started off normal: Charlotte got up, took a shower, did her morning ritual, picked out and put on a yellow, flower-print t-shirt and some red shorts, checked to see if her mom was home, ate breakfast, and was to rush out the door when she heard...

WOOF!

She turned to see Thomas looking at her expectantly, with his leash in his mouth. She had almost forgotten him, also forgetting to give him bacon. She knelt down and held Thomas's head.

'Thomas, you can't come with me. I'm still getting used to California and I can't take you everywhere.'

Thomas started to pout and whine.

'Don't worry, I'll take you for a walk when I get back, o.k.?"

WOOF!

'Alright, you know how to turn the TV on and I left you a few dog treats and dog food in your bowl in case you get hungry, o.k.?" She knew it was stupid to talk to him like a child, but it was start comforting to both of them.

Plus, she wasn't lying about the TV part. On one of his first nights home, he put his paw on the TV remote and Charlotte had to get up at 12 in the morning to find him in the living room watching Animal Planet with extreme intenseness.

WOOF!

BEEP! BEEP!

Charlotte got up and looked through the window blinds to see that Phil was driving the public bus. She rushed out the door, yelling 'Bye Thomas!" as she ran off.

When she got onto the bus, Phil asked 'You sure you don't want to go to Paradise Cove?"

She nodded her head. 'I'm sure, plus I think I want to try my hand at surfing while I'm there,' she said.

'Ah, you want to be in the water, eh? Well, I know the way, but traffic's bad for the original way, so we might have to drive passed Paradise on the way there,' Phil explained.

'Well, I'll find something,' she said with her infamous smirk. Phil laughed and started to drive off.

But little did they know... a certain pit bull terrier was running after them.

\* \* \*

><p>Long story short: The bus broke down, receiving two flat tires, a dead battery, and a broken engine. Charlotte was outside the bus with Thomas trying to get help. But there was no cars passing by and no phone reception.<p>

'Well, there's no use. I think we could get help after I put my only spare tire on one of the wheels, but since the engine's down, we'll be walking,' Phil said as the two were taking a break.

'I'm so sorry, Phil. I swore I didn't know he would get out and run after us like that,' Charlotte said apologetically.

She was truly sorry. But she guessed that if Thomas has a perfect memory, he would have remembered the deal they made when they first met and felt that leaving her alone would break that deal. And that meant following her everywhere to make that deal possible to keep.

'Well, it's not your fault. I just got scared of him easily and I let my pride get the better of me,' he said, 'but for the mean time, you're stuck with me.' Thomas growled suddenly.

'Yeah, and so is the mutt too.' Phil, probably to avoid being attacked, she suspected, went back onto the bus, claiming it was cooler in there.

He wasn't lying about that. The sun was so unbearing that it could give anyone sun burn. But the heat didn't bother Charlotte. Strangely, it was quite nice. She looked behind her to see Thomas his back, sunbathing. So, she decided to do the same. The feel of heat radiated over her skin, giving it a nice feel.

Ahh, she thought as she closed her eyes, this feels nice.

—

...Then a melody started to play.

Would you come with me?

We'll swim the deep blue sea...

Aaaahhhhhh...

Charlotte's eyes popped open as she rose from the ground. Thomas did too, only to see what his owner was doing.

Come to me, Charlotte.

You know you wish to be with me. Follow my voice you'll get what you'll receive.

The voice from before. It was loving again, like her grandmother's before she passed.

Come to me Charlotte and receive your gift. Your companion can come too, for he'll be helpful along the way. \_

Just follow my voice.

Charlotte started walking away from the bus, but Phil noticed and honked his horn.

Tell him that you're going to get help. He'll be fine by himself.

Charlotte stopped and repeated it's words as she yelled to Phil. 'I'm going to get help. You'll be fine on your own,' she shouted, not looking at the bus behind her. Phil started to object, but that

if Thomas was with her, she would be fine.

' 'Crazy girl...' ' he muttered.

She began walking again, following the lovely voice that guided her. Thomas just walked beside her, not only to protect her... but because he heard the voice too.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>The Enchantment Song! It.. it... it was used on Charlotte! <strong>

**\*\*How was that even possible?! Well, I would LOVE to explain!\*\***

**\*\*You see, while doing my research on H2O: Just Add Water Wikia/Wikipedia, while doing my research for this story( yes, I do research for my stories), I came upon the Siren Singing and The Enchantment Song and realized that since it said that it was \_\*\*usually\*\*\_ used on men and boys and was used to make them follow mermaids around, usually to their deaths, it would make since that a siren, female or male, could use this on the same gender. So I thought, let's make Charlotte go under the siren effect! And look how well it turned out!\*\***

**\*\*Also, for Charlotte's singing voice, I choose...Kate Alexa! Hey, she sung the songs for season 2 ,so why not give her voice to Charlotte, only a little deeper range,since in this story, and in the future, she'll be singing and most of the songs from season 2, in this story, will be written by Charlotte herself! And think about it:\*\*\*\***

**><strong>\*\*Charlotte + ' 'Help Me Find My Way''+ redemption+ needing help to guide her = GENIUS! And what is going on with Alaine and her mom? I smell trouble!\*\***

**\*\*Keep reading and reviewing!\*\***

**\*\*P.S. What do you think of me having Charlotte dye her hair?\*\***

**\*\*YOU CHOOSE! \*\***

**\*\*Options: black or blue (like Demi Lovato)?\*\***

**\*\*Say in review box! \*\***

**\*\*BYE!\*\***

## 8. The Voice, Continued

**\*\*Hey! For those of you who are wondering what happened to Charlotte in the last chapter, if you're smart, you've probably already figured it out, and for those who haven't, keep reading. So, I wrote this chapter to show you what happened after the voice leads her away, and for those who don't want to know, well I'll let you guys use your imaginations.\*\***

\* \* \*

><p><strong>2 days later...<strong>

Beep...Beep...Beep..

'She should be waking up anytime soon,' a male, gruff voice said, 'miss, I understand you're worried, but she's in the best care possible.'

'I don't care!' a female, panicked voice exclaimed, 'that's \_my\_ daughter that was found on some woman's doorstep! \_My\_ daughter that hasn't waken up in\_ 2\_ days! \_My\_ daughter that could be dead for all I know!"

WOOF!

'Get that dog out of here! He's been here long enough. My nurses can't go near her because the dog won't let them and his barks are scaring the patients!" the male voice said.

'I brought him here because he's been with her and could wake her up!" the female voice said.

WOOF!

'I said get him OUT!"

Grrrrrrr...

Thomas lifted his upper body onto the bed and gave a loud bark.

Grrrrrrr...WOOF!

Charlotte's eyes popped wide open as she jerked her body up and looked around for her dog.

'Thomas, THOMAS! Where are you?!' she screamed as she tried to get out of her bed. She turned to see Thomas on her bed and squealed 'Thomas!' as she hugged him.

'See, I told you he would help,' the female, yet familiar voice said.

Charlotte looked up to see her mother, her face tear-stained and smiling at her. Annette rushed up and hugged her, squeezing the life out of her.

'Oh honey, you have no idea how much you scared me to death!"

Charlotte was confused. Why was her mom scared? She looked at her and said 'Mom, I'm fine. I was lying on the grass with Thomas while the bus was broke down.'

Annette gave her daughter a complex look. 'Oh that bus driver drugged you,' she said, 'I swear that when I get my hands on that fat weasel...'

Her mom was about to go on a stream of curses until the same gruff,

male voice said ''Excuse me, but perhaps I can be some assistance.''

Charlotte looked up to see a light-skinned man with glasses and a white coat was looking at them. He came up and sat in front of her, pulled out a small flashlight, and examined her eyes.

"Personally, I think she's suffering from a small case of amnesia. I bet the man who came in here earlier was telling the truth. So tell me, what's the last thing you remember?" Charlotte started to answer when the \_voice \_came back into her head.

\_Tell him you and the dog went to get help.\_

''Thomas and I went to go find help for the bus,'' she said.

The man stopped examining her eyes and looked at her. ''Well, I heard that from the bus driver, but what happened before that, like how you started your day."

''Well, I took a shower, did my morning ritual-''

''Which consists of?" he asked.

"Well, I take a morning shower, and afterwards, I wash my face, brush my teeth, put on deodorant, blow dry my hair, and..." she trailed off. The last thing she always did was something that she was not proud of and didn't like to tell people, especially strangers.

''Miss, please tell me the last thing you do?" he asked again.

Charlotte sighed and took a breath.

"And I take 2 pill of antidepressants.'' She did it. She told a complete stranger that she took 'happy pills' to get through the day. After she'd been let out of the hospital in Georgia, the doctors had prescribed meds for her to take. They said it would help her feel better.

She expected him to have a reaction, but instead he wrote some thing down on a clipboard he had and said ''Alright, what else?"

Charlotte was taken back. She had not expected him to do that. ''I pick out my clothes and do my hair. That day, I was about to go outside when my dog, Thomas, stopped me. He wanted to come and I said no. Then, I heard the bus and left the house. I told Phil, the bus driver, that I wanted to go to a new beach and maybe try surfing.''

"So,'' the man said, '' since you two are on a first name basis, can you care to tell me how you both know each other?"

Charlotte slightly blushed in embarrassment. Her mom still didn't know what she really did that Sunday. And having a stranger ask her in front of Annette was not the best way to tell.

''The day I moved here, my mom had to go to work, long story, and I spent the day unpacking everything, on my own free will,'' she added



for extra measure and to not get her mom in trouble, ''when I was done, I got dressed in some nicer clothes and got on a public bus, which is how I met Phil. He was the driver. He went out of his way and took me to Malibu.''

Annette was furious. Well, her skin was red in anger, but it lessened as she continued.

''He left me there, but he came back for me at 9pm and I went on with my night. The next day, I found out that he was my school bus driver.''

''Wait a minute, you told me you were only stuck at home all day! You lied to me?" her mom asked, truly hurt.

Charlotte turned to her mom. ''No, it was just that you were busy and I got everything done. So, I decided to take an adventure.''

Her mom gave her a look that said that they would be talking about this later.

''So let me get this straight. You know the bus driver because he takes you places out of his jurisdiction?" he asked sternly. She couldn't blame him. Anyone who would have heard this would scream ''pedophile'' in their eyes.

But Charlotte could tell when she couldn't trust someone and when she could, and she felt that Phil was someone she could trust. Her senses were better than that now.

''He was only being nice to me and taking me to places outside Valencia was his way of showing generosity.''

The man got up and went to the door saying ''Well, I tell the nurses to keep your daughter stay overnight for observation and make sure the police didn't arrest \_Phil\_,'' he put the emphases around his name, ''for something he didn't do. I'll talk to you tomorrow morning.''

He looked at his clipboard and walked out of the room as Annette yelled ''Thank you Dr. Harris!''

\_Wait a minute\_, Charlotte thought, \_doctor? nurses? observation? This can't be...\_

But it was too late to confirm.

''I'm in a hospital, aren't I?" she asked.

She already knew the answer.

Everything was white. The walls were white. The lights were white. The machines next to her were white. The beds were white. Heck, the gown she was wearing was white! Charlotte quickly noticed the IVs in her right arm and resisting the urge to pull them off. It's not that she hated hospitals. After all, that where people who were really sick or severely injured went, and most likely came out great form.

It's just that she hated being a patient in one.

'Well, what did you expect,' her mother said as she looked at her daughter sternly, 'I was about to end my shift at work when I received a phone call from the hospital, the hospital of all places, saying that a woman found you on her doorstep, soaking wet and unconscious... oh, its Georgia all over again!'

Suddenly, Charlotte felt something stir inside of her, it was familiar, almost like a... like a flame. A fiery burst of sudden energy raging inside of her like a wildfire. Suddenly, she heard a voice pop into her head.

\_Let it go...\_

SLAP!

She almost didn't realize that she slapped her mom until she saw Annette step back, hold her right cheek that was beginning to form a red handprint.

But, at the moment, she could care less. Annette looked at her daughter shockingly. She had never known that Charlotte would react so violently.

She pointed her finger at her mother accusingly. 'Don't you EVER bring that up! This is NOTHING like what happened in Georgia! I didn't try to kill myself then and I certainly wasn't trying to kill myself now! I might remember something from, what?, 2 or 3 days ago, but if you even THINK that I'm some innocent depressed little girl, oh so help me I'll-'

WOOF!

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Thomas's POV (written in 3rd person)<strong>

Even if humans couldn't understand him, he could understand them quite well.

He understood the difference between a pet and a stray, love and abuse, neglect and abandonment. He understood it all, for as a neglected dog that was used to protect an abandon junkyard, he hated to understand humans. While as a pet, you could be cuddled and spoiled while others could be beaten or somewhere between.

The day he ran away from that junkyard was the best day of his life, for not only was he free from the abuse, he was taken in by the nicest person he ever met.

Charlotte.

\_\*\*Flashback:\*\*\_

\_It was a hot day in Sammy's 'Forbidden' Palace, or as others would call it, a junkyard. Beyond the locked metal gates were piles of broken cars, glasses, trash, and much more garbage that would have had much potential to fill the ozone land. Sammy himself, an oversized guy that reeked of bad whopper burgers and gas, was watching his small TV in a small shack by the yard. \_

\_Tied up by a post, was a big, brown pit bull terrier who was ripping a badly wrapped bandage off his paw. It healed on its own, but it was somewhat hard to lick on. The dog was tied up in front of the gate, watching for 'intruders' who wanted to steal from the yard, but those 'intruders' were really middle school kids looking for a spot to hang out. The dog didn't want to cause any trouble himself, in fact he was hopping to see if a small little girl that would come by, bringing him food. Sammy fed him mostly bones and a few meat scraps, but he knew how to make them last.\_

\_Suddenly, a few guys and girls, probably college students, walked past the gates. The guys walked past him but the girls stopped and looked at him.\_

\_''Aw, look at the cute doggy,'' a blond girl cooed. She reached into her bag, pulled out a treat, and threw it to the dog through the holes of the metal gate. The dog happily caught it in his mouth and ate it. Then, he walked to the girl as far as he could, since he was tied up, and licked her fingers that were on his side of the gate.\_

\_''Aw, that's so cute,'' another girl said as she started to rub him around the ear, much to the dog's enjoyment.\_

\_One of the guys saw this and said ''You do know whose dog that is, right?"\_

\_The girls looked at him. ''Who?"\_

\_''That's Sammy Biggens's dog, Mutt.'' Yep, that was the dog's name. Since his owner didn't bother to name him, he called him Mutt, when he just happens to actually be a purebred.\_

\_''He's supposed to be a big bad dog that keeps people from entering the junkyard. But he must've died because this dog's WAY too soft to be Mutt,'' the guy said.\_

\_But the girls rolled their eyes and continued to pet Mutt. \_

\_''No way, Hetchet. Dogs can be nice when they want to, like this little guy. It's the owners that give their dogs a bad name. Isn't that right?" she asked the dog.\_

\_WOOF!\_

\_''See?" he blond said as she started to rub Mutt again,'' he's not bad. He's just a softie, aren't ya?"\_

\_WOOF!\_

\_SLAM! \_

\_They all turned to see the door to the small shack opened. A pale guy who looked like a heavy-weight sumo-wrestler came from the shock.

\_

\_He had a 5 o'clock shadow and messy hair. His eyes were pure black and his teeth were yellow. He wore a WAY-too-small white tank top and over-sized baggy shorts. His red stomach was sticking out and his

white feet were swollen. Sammy Biggens.\_

\_When he saw the students touching the dog, and Mutt not doing a thing about it...he lost it.\_

\_''WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING TO MUTT?!" he yelled as he wobbled towards them. The guys were quick to defend the girls.\_

\_''Listen, sir, we were just walking by and the girls saw the dog and-''\_

\_''I DON'T CARE IF YOU SAW AN ELEPHANT! LEAVE MY PROPERTY AT ONCE OR I'LL...I'LL...'' Sammy trailed off.\_

\_Then, he grabbed an empty beer bottle and swung it at the gate, the glass braking and hitting the girls.\_

\_The blond received a nasty cut on her leg. But to Mutt, he saw red.\_

\_WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF!\_

\_He struggled to get out of his leash, but the metal-wired collar on his neck wasn't helping either. Sammy turned to him and started to kick him.\_

\_''STUPID DOG! CAN'T EVEN PROTECT MY PROPERTY, YOU LITTLE MUTT!''  
\_

\_The others tried to stop him, but he wasn't going to give the dog any mercy.\_

\_Then, the blond grabbed shard and, what was probably a one-in-a-million hit, managed to throw the shard through the rope, the shard cutting through it successfully.\_

\_The dog didn't hesitate to escape through a hole in the gate and run.\_

\_But before he ran for freedom, he licked the blond girl on the face and barked twice.\_

\_Thank You.\_

\_The girl smiled in understanding and watched as the dog escaped with his life...\_

\_\*\*Flashback Ends...\*\*\_

That day, he found himself at a mall and was digging through the trash until he saw \_her.\_

The girl was running for a few minutes until she saw him. She wasn't skinny, but she wasn't big either. She had a average person's shape, red hair, and brown eyes. When he saw those guys after her, she made a dash for it and he, well... he bite the leader in a place that should be untouched to humans.

After the guys ran away, he greeted the girl and the rest was history for him. Though she wanted him to protect her, their bond had grown a

lot since that fateful day. But something was wrong.

He kept hearing a voice when he was with her and, to his surprise, she heard it too. But to his other surprise, no one else did. He could feel its presence and he never like it.

The night that snake-tentacle came, he was on his guard. It never came back, but he still remembered it, like what happened a few days ago.

He remembered the look in her eyes when they were walking from the bus...

He remembered how they walked for so long that he knew that her feet had to be hurting...

He remembered her walking to a cliff point and walking down the stairs built along the cliff side that lead to the beach...

He remembered being lead to an isolated part of the beach...

He remembered how she asked him to sniff along the boulders and cliff sides until a hidden opening appeared...

He remembered how the two walked in and entered a hidden cave with a pool in it...

He remembered how she jumped in it as the pool started to glow and bubble...

He remembered how she just walked out of the pool and they ended up back on the beach and left...

He remembered they ended up in some neighborhood and she rung the doorbell outside someone's house until she passed out...

He remembered sneaking into the ambulance that took his owner away...

But most of all, he remembered the \_voice \_that gave her every single command and he couldn't snap her out of it.

As he saw the violent exchange that appeared between his owner and her mother, he felt \_its\_ presence inside of her.

He barked as loud and hard as he could, hoping to bring the true presence of his loving owner back.

WOOF!

\* \* \*

><p><strong>3rd POV (Back at the hospital with Charlotte and her mom)<strong>

WOOF!

Charlotte's head jerked up and Annette saw this.

Her daughter looked like she had just come out of a trance...like she

had no idea that she just hit her own mother. She was angry at one moment, and then she was calm.

'Mom, why are you holding your cheek?" she asked her mother curiously. Annette saw this and decided to lie.

'Oh, I was leaving the bathroom and I accidentally hit the door. I'll have a nurse look at me later. You know, why don't you go to sleep and I'll go get something to eat and come back, o.k.?"

Charlotte looked at her mother suspiciously, but nodded as she laid back down on her bed.

Annette left the room and headed to the clinic. \_I'm gonna have to keep an eye on her\_, she thought.

Charlotte didn't realize that she fell asleep until her mom closed the door. She knew her mom was lying, but she didn't want to push it. She didn't want to know.

To be honest, she doesn't remember what happened the last couple of days, except lying in the sun by Thomas. She could feel that Thomas was fully on the bed, probably curled up in a ball and lying on her feet, asleep. Then, all the sudden, she started to sing a familiar melody as she was sleeping.

\* \* \*

><p>The moon was starting to rise over Paradise Cove.<p>

\_Would you come with me?\_

But it wasn't just any moon. It was a full moon, glowing white in the sky, giving off an unknown blue aura.

\_We'll swim the deep blue sea...\_

Suddenly, the pure white moon started to turn red, giving off a menacing blood aura.

\_Oooooohhhhhh...\_ \*\*(Think of Cleo's singing during the Siren Effect.)\*\*

Laguna watched this from the outside patio of the caf   and turned to her family. Karen, Brendan, and her son-in-law, Jonathan, were huddled up together, their faces stunned in fear. Karen stepped up and was the first to speak.

'So, it's happened, isn't it? She's rising again, and right when we were \_so\_ sure we found the right moon pool?"

Laguna shook her head.

'No, it just hurt our situation drastically. Not only have we found the wrong pool, but... she's found her. And to make it worst, she's used the Enchantment Song on her and has had her undergo the transformation with success. Who knows what powers she has given her,' Laguna said as she looked at the red moon.

'But, for hundreds of years, you , and most of your offsprings,

including me, have searched for potential people who could be the reincarnations of Ane'lie for years, even when she was reborn as a man, but a teenager who could... I just don't want to even imagine the amount of control and power she has over her," Karen said as she hugged herself like she was out in the cold.

Laguna nodded. "Yes, it's hard to think about, but we need to find her and at least give her some protection before \_she\_ gets her next chance to control her. And if \_she\_ does and Ane's new body doesn't now her powersâ€¦ I swear to whoever or whatever made that comet hit earth... there will be consequences."

Suddenly, Karen came up with an idea. "Why don't you train her. After all, you're the true bearer of the Original 3, and who knows how many more abilities you gained over the years. And that way, if she really is the true reincarnation, she's not only powerful, but she can defend herself against \_her\_," Karen suggested.

And Laguna couldn't agree more.

Just a simple charm or spell couldn't save her reborn friend from the dangers that was lurking below. So, training her friend's reincarnation was the best way/option of protecting her and giving her a way of self-defense.

She made her final decision.

"Alright, we'll find her, bring her here, and train her. I will NOT lose her again!"

Karen nodded. She knew her mother's long past and would do anything to help her, even in the impossible, along with her current family.

Then, her husband stepped in.

"Alright, I get it. Find your mother's reincarnated mermaid or human or whatever, bring her around here, and save the girl from a doom that's destined to repeat itself. And what? Become legacies or something? We don't even know where she is. All we know is that she's back in what? Her 500th body is walking around somewhere, unknown about the damage it's about to do. Your mother's arch nemesis is rising from the ocean after a very, \_very\_ \_long\_ nap, and what else?"

He turned to his pregnant wife, "Karen, what in the world makes you think that her reincarnation is a teenager that we're talking about? For all we know, the real person that \_she\_ could be controlling is really Brendan and we're on a wild goose chase!"

Brendan looked at his stepfather accusingly. "Hey! I resent that!"

But Karen looked at her husband in amusement and there was a glint of mischief in her eyes. Oh no.

"Easy," she said as she was walking towards him, "a \_teenager\_ was the last one to look into Mother's eyes and receive a vision from her."

Then Brendan joined in on the pursuit.

'And, the first one to put one back into gram's head."

It was starting to dawn on Jonathan on who they were talking about and began to back away as he shook his head and muttered 'No, no...'

By the time he backed into a wall, they all cornered him.

'And,' Laguna said as she finally joined in, 'she still has that lovely shade of red hair as I remember her having.'

Jonathan was shaking his head furiously, yelling 'No!'

Karen looked towards her son and mother, then looked towards her husband, with the smile of the Cheshire Cat from Alice in Wonderland, much to his horror.

'Mom? What was the name of that girl who came the café last week?' she asked Laguna, with a hint of amusement.

Her mother answered in the \_exact\_ same tone. She pretended to rub her chin, as if she was thinking, and then said 'Ah, yes. Charlotte Watsford.'

They all looked at Jonathan like mad men and he was thinking one thing:\_ We're doomed.\_

\* \* \*

><p><strong>MUAHAHAHAHA! I'm EVIL! I bet you did NOT see that coming! And I think I can ask the BIG question that all of you are asking: WHAT THE FREAKIN HELL IS GOING ON?!<strong>

\*\*Well, keep reading! Cause we are going deeper into, not only the mystery of the \*\*\_\*\*voice \*\*\_\*\*and Laguna's family, but what was truly going on after Charlotte left Australia! \*\*

\*\*HAHA! I ALWAYS KNEW SHE COULDN'T BE NO ORDINARY GIRL! ESPECAILLY WITH A EX-MERMAID FOR A GRANDMOTHER!\*\*

\*\*P.S. THIS MONTH IS MY 14TH BIRTHDAY! SO FEEL FREE TO WRITE ME SOMETHING AS A BIRTHDAY GIFT!\*\*

\*\*READ AND REVIEW!\*\*

Bottom of Form

## 9. Tryouts and Tails

\*\*\*\*Hello my b-e-a-utiful readers ( saw what I did with Megan Nicole!) and I LOVE the reviews that I have gotten from my last chapter and if I gave it away (you would've read Thomas's POV) you would've guessed what happened to Charlotte! And I've hinted it since the beginning! Sigh... Maybe I shouldn't have told you that guys in the beginning that she would be a mermaid but...ENJOY! \*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*P.S. I deleted the author's note since I didn't need it, so this



is the 9th chapter.\*\*\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><em>The day Charlotte got out the hospital, a nurse had come into her room and brought in a bouquet of lilies.<em>

\_''These were addressed to you. But I don't know who sent them. There was no name or anything from whoever sent it, except a note,'' she said as she gave the flowers to Charlotte. Charlotte pulled a small note from inside the bouquet and read:\_

\_\*\*I hope your feeling better. Softball tryout are tomorrow and you have choir practice at 12.\*\*\_

\_The was indeed no name on the note, but she couldn't help but shake the feeling that she knew who it was from and smiled.\_

\_Charlotte turned to the nurse and thanked her as she left and her mom entered that room. Annette capped her hands together in admiration. \_

\_''Oh, honey, I knew that dress would look great on you! But did you have to add the sneakers? Your leaving the hospital, not a casual dress event!'' she said as she examined her daughter.\_

\_Charlotte was wearing a simple white dress with light red ruffles at the bottom, her red hair was put up in a bun but she let her bangs almost cover her eyes. The only thing that didn't look formal was the Nike sneakers that she was wearing.\_

\_Charlotte looked at herself. ''Um, maybe that's the point,'' she said.\_

\_Annette ignored that and noticed the flowers in her daughter's hands. ""Who sent you those?"\_

\_Charlotte looked at them and shrugged. ''No idea. They just came. So, you ready to go?"\_

\_Annette nodded. ''Yeah. I'm feeling very... anxious to not have to come here again.''\_

\*\*Probably just the flashbacks from Georgia\*\*,\_ she thought.\_

\_With that, the two left the room and exited the hospital. By the time the left, they were halfway home.\_

\_Suddenly, Charlotte had to tell her mom something.\_

\_''So, mom, how would you feel about me joining the school choir?"\_

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Tuesday<strong>

It was time for Charlotte to go back to school, much to her mom's protests. On her account, she could go to school but call Annette if something went wrong, which was unlikely.

Her morning went the same as usual. She got out of bed, took a shower, did her morning ritual, put on a cute outfit: khaki pants, a turquoise sleeveless chiffon with matching ballet flats, a blue watch and a turquoise bead bracelet. She put her hair up in a side ponytail using a black and blue scrunchie and took Thomas for a walk, or more like a run since he recently formed a hatred for her neighbor's cat.

But by the time the two returned, Charlotte smelled a whiff of cinnamon toast and oatmeal. Like curiosity killed the cat, she went into the kitchen and was surprised to see her mom cooking breakfast.

'Mom, shouldn't you be at work?' she asked her as she sat down at the table.

'Actually, John gave me a day off. So, I figured that I'd make us some breakfast and I'd drop you off at school,' Annette said as she placed Charlotte's plate in front of her and started to eat her own.

'Oh, you don't have to drop me off. Phil- I mean, my bus driver is used to Thomas riding the bus with me,' Charlotte said cautiously. She didn't know what her mom thought of Phil, but she didn't want to push it.

After a few moments of silence, Annette stopped eating and looked at her daughter.

'Um, sweetie, I just wanted to...apologize for how I acted in the hospital. I guess that I got scared of you being in the hospital again... worrying if you'd started to harm yourself...', Annette trailed off as she put her head down slightly.

Charlotte was confused, but decided to lie.

'I'm sorry... I guess I was just pretty tired.' Though she wasn't sure about what her mom was apologizing for, she had a feeling that she shouldn't ask because she didn't want to know. So, she decided to change the subject.

'So, I'm trying out for the softball team today, so I hope you don't mind me coming home late?'

Annette looked up at her in surprise. 'But aren't you already in the choir?' she asked. After Charlotte told her mom about her joining choir, minus the bathroom incident, Annette was over the moon with question, like when her first performance was & etc., and a little hurt that she didn't tell her sooner.

'I know, but I wanted to get active and all...' Charlotte said. As much as she wasn't insecure about her looks, she never told anyone about the verbal abuse that went down in Georgia about her weight, height, and size. Though she had no problem with her height, she wanted to be a little thinner. Not super model thin, but just thinner. Besides, she never told her mom about it since Annette had enough on her plate already. **\*( I just had to add this bit. This is for all the people/readers who hate Charlotte because of the way she looked on the show!)\***

'Brilliant! Oh, I can't wait to see your first game and meet your little friends," her mom enthusiastically,' I'm gonna need to bring a camera, some ports drinks and water for your teammates...'

'STOP! I'm JUST trying out , mom. I won't know for two weeks,' Charlotte said, stopping her mom from stressing early. By the time they were done talking and finished eating, Charlotte let her mom drive her to school.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>At softball try-outs...<strong>

The day went well for Charlotte. No news of her absence or her stay in the hospital spread through the school. But when she opened her locker, she found a note inside. It read:

\_\*Hope your feeling up to try-outs. Coach Mildred is one of the best coaches this school has and one of the toughest. Good luck!\*\_

Once again, no name. But she smiled to herself. Someone was going out of their way to make sure she was prepared for what was ahead. And she was thankful for that.

She spent her lunch period with Thomas and the rest of the day went by as a breeze. Then, she was in the auditorium with the other 49 students that were selected by Miss Analies for choir practice. And not to her surprise, Alaine was there. She had always wanted to talk to her about what had happened in the bathroom a week ago, but she didn't want to push her and become her enemy or anything negative.

So, Miss Analies had the girls do a solo, and the strangest thing happened. When Miss Analies pointed towards her for a solo, almost the exact moment she sung, the boys started to gather around her, staring at her in awe. But when Miss Analies blew the whistle, the boys went back to their seats, dazed and confused.

Now she was outside on a baseball field and, to her surprise and again, not so much, there were all girls and Alaine was among them.

They were all sitting on the bleachers, talking among themselves. Charlotte changed into dark blue and black performance running T-shirt, Nike woman's running shoes, neon stud yoga pants( for flexibility and easy to wear), and used her scrunchie to form a long, smooth ponytail that slung around her shoulder.

Then, a large, older-looking woman, probably in her late 30s or 40s, stood in front of them in a red track suit. All the girls stared at her.

'Alright, I am Coach Honey Mildred, but ONLY address me as Coach Mildred," she said, "I'm the coach of this year's new softball team, and I will say this once and only once: I demand respect and if I don't get that, or be taken seriously, then you can all get your make up and stuff and go home because I do NOT tolerate ignorance, disrespect, laziness, and excuses."

"I will be watching you during this one day trial. And for those who don't know why your are, and are only, trying out for one day, it's because I want to test your limits, see as far as you could go if this sport had your life on the line, and push you until your bones break, your hair's drenched from sweat, and your begging for water, and I won't give it to you until I see that you've earned it. Now, does anyone want to back out?"

Charlotte and the others watched as 9 girls left the bleachers.

Couch Mildred nodded. "Good. Now that we've got rid of our sore losers and butt scratchers, I'll have Alaine Williams and Dominique Kane lead you to the fields and start the drills. Girls?"

As everyone got off the benches and walked towards the field, Charlotte caught Alaine watching her for a moment before turning her head away. Once there, Alaine took 10 of the girls, including Charlotte, and a latino girl, Dominique, she assumed, got the rest.

"First things first, my name is Alain Williams and I'm the co-captain for this year's team, and this is my teammate/co-captain, Dominique Kane. We'll be the ones to see if you can handle this 'group' and can lead us to nationals. Now, I'm not saying that it's a possibility. I'm saying that it's a responsibility. We've never lose a game unless its raining or someone died. Understand?" Alaine asked.

Everyone nodded.

' 'Good. Now, Dominique will explain the drills." Alaine gestured to Dominique.

"Alright," Dominique said, "first, we're gonna have all of you do 20 laps around the field and then, we're gonna give you 20 jumping jacks and 15 sit ups. Of course, we're gonna have to give you a 5 minute break. I mean, this tryout might call for some parents down here to pick up their injured kids, but it won't kill anybody, and then were gonna to see what positions your good at on the field...What are you guys waiting for? TWENTY LAPS, NOW!"

The girls quickly started to run around the field. For some, it went at ease for them, but for the rest, they were starting to regret not leaving. Charlotte's stomach felt like it was about to burst if she didn't get any water. But she was far behind, and if she wanted to get on the team, she wasn't going down without a fight, even if she needed to stay hydrated!

After 20 laps, Alaine finally blew the whistle. All the girls quickly went to the bleachers, grasping for their water bottles. By the time Charlotte made it to her gym bag, she practically tore it apart as she found her water bottle and started to chug it down.

She was told to drink water regularly, but she's never felt the need to drink it so bad before. Guess she should have listened when her 6th grade science teacher told her class that everyone's body was made up of 80% of water.

Then, Alaine blew the whistle again, signaling the end of the first 5

minute break.

' 'Alright, you've had your break. Now, get your butts on the field and give me 20 jumping jack!" Dominique yelled.

Everybody quickly got on the field and started doing jumping jacks.

After that and doing the sit ups, much to the aching pain in Charlotte's sides, they finally got around to using the equipment.

' 'Alright, first, we're gonna start with the pitcher. We are going to see how well you throw. If your fast, we'll have you doing it again. If your slow, well, I think you know where you'll be sitting. I'll go first and show you how it's done," Alaine said as she stepped on the field.

After they put on their equipment, she got one of her knees at the pitching rubber and Dominique crouched down at the diamond, ready to catch it.

"Now, this is an easy way. You must have your body still and your shoulders stiff, so that when you throw the ball, you have resistance. Keep the leg you have up and keep it slightly bended so that it's not locked."

Alaine threw the ball in an underhand motion and threw it to Dominique, who caught it in her glove with ease and threw it back to her.

' 'Now, you have to throw it, throw it as hard as you can, but let the ball roll off your fingertips,' Alaine said.

The two threw and passed the ball a couple of times until they called for volunteers.

' 'Alright, Charlotte, why don't you try first?"

Charlotte was caught by surprise. She didn't expect to be called on, but didn't have a choice. She got on the rubber and got in the same position as Alaine. She positioned herself exactly like Alaine instructed her and threw her first throw.

It wasn't as fast as she anticipated.

"You have to let the ball slip through your fingers. Keep your body still and your shoulders stiff or else your throw will come out sloppy," Alaine instructed.

Charlotte took a deep breathe and gave it another go. She winded her arm a few times before she let the ball fly swiftly through her fingers and threw it to Dominique.

But instead of the ball hitting her glove... it hit her stomach.

Dominique cried out in pain as she fell to the ground, clutching her stomach. Everyone rushed to her and tried to see if she was okay.

Charlotte was by her side and quickly apologized. "I am so, so sorry Dominique. It was accident! I swear! I didn't mean to!"

Dominique looked like she was intense pain. She was clutching her stomach and had tears falling from her eyes.

"Give her some space! Give her some space!" Coach Mildred exclaimed as she cut through the group of girls that surrounded Dominique.

After examining her, she told one of the girls to take the co-captain to the nurse's office.

After the girls left, the couch looked at all the girls. But specifically looked at Charlotte.

"Well, Miss Kane will be out for the rest of tryouts. But since we have some 'strong' girls going for the team," she looked at Charlotte menacingly, "I will have the honors of helping out with tryouts. This will be starting by everyone spending 2 hours practicing their pitching. Well, what are you standing around for? Move it!"

All the girls groaned and sent glares at Charlotte, who was looking miserable.

One again, she's caused problems for the group.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>After tryouts (Charlotte's POV)<strong>

After tryouts were over, I was the only girl heading into the girls' locker room. The others didn't bother to take a shower and, personally, probably didn't want to be around me. I couldn't blame them. Like everyone else, every part of her body was sore to the bone.

I'm now realizing that the only reason the captians even started right away with the equipment was so that Couch Mildred didn't have to come and do tryout herself. But I just had to injure one of them and now my arms are sore, my legs are stiff, my back is aching, and my feet...well let's just say I'm making an effort to walk on them.

Couch Mildred was serious. After practicing our pitching, we all spent 3 hours doing speed and agility exercises. And since most of them were hard to do, we spent ANOTHER 3 hours perfecting them, plus 3 suicides for the girl who started to complain a lot.

I took my phone out to look at the time.

10:30 pm.

Crap, I'm late. I didn't intend to be stuck in school overnight, but if I didn't take a shower and change, the school security guard ( yes, my school has one) would find me and call my mom, who would already be mad at me for staying out so late.

Once I got into the empty locker room, I immediately took off my tryout clothes, turned the water on in the shower and stepped in. And you would NOT believe how good hot water felt on me. Every muscle was getting sooth, my feet were hurting less and the rest of me felt great. No, I felt amazing.

\_Ahh,\_ I thought, \_this is nice.\_ As the hot water poured on my bare skin, I realized something I never took notice of:

There was no voice.

I should have known it was all in my head. I was just hallucinating.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Unknown POV<strong>

The clock went by. But unnoticed to Charlotte... she shouldn't have touched the water.

Tick...Tock...

23 hours has passes since she was conscious...

Tick...Tock...

Her gift is about to be received...

Tick...Tock...

... 10:58... 10:59... 11:00 pm...

It has begun...

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Charlotte's POV<strong>

I felt strange, but I brushed it off.

As I continued to wash myself, I dropped the bar of soap that I was using. So as I bent down to pick it up, I wasn't ready for what happened to me next.

Water started to swirl around me fast, not like a shower should. It was like it was building up and rising over my feet...

... then my legs...

... then my waist...

...then my stomach...

...then my neck...

... then my head...

...

"Ouch!"

As I fell to the cold, solid floor, I looked at myself. I was so sure I must've bumped my head at first. But I found myself wearing a shining silver-blue top... and looked down at my legs to see something that I thought I would never see again...

I had a tail.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>READ & REVIEW!<strong>

\*\*P.S. Did I get the softball part right?\*\*

## 10. STOP SOPA 2014!

Stop SOPA. SOPA stands for Stop Online Piracy Acts. In this case, all fanart will be deleted, all fan-pages, fanfics, fan made videos, etc. Please help stop SOPA.

copy this link and go to this site to join up :  
[.gov/petition/stop-sopa-2014/q0Vkk0Zr](http://.gov/petition/stop-sopa-2014/q0Vkk0Zr)

It ends: March 19,2014- to days after this post.

## 11. Unexpected Calls and The Legend, Part 1

\*\* NEW CHAPTER..not really. For those who re-read my chapters frequently, you might've noticed that chapter 11 was out of order. If not, then skip over this message! I apologize for that, so here you go!\*\*

\*\*Now that Charlotte's a mermaid again, you'll get a special guest star appearance from a certain person in Australia. Hint: Who's the most reliable person when it comes to mermaids?\*\*

\*\*P.S.\*\*\*\* WE FINALLY WON AGAINST SOPA! OVER 100,000  
\*\*

\*\*ENJOY!\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><strong>3rd POV<strong>

You would think that after a year, a year of being an average \_normal \_person, Charlotte would forget the most simplest of things and lose most of her memories of past events, like birthdays or report cards.

But no! She just had to have her memories regained when she gets a tail! Revived, rejuvenated, back from the dead, and to make it worse, she quickly remembered one good thing she needed to do:

Get out of the water!

Since she fell, her dorsal fin was still in the shower getting hot



water running over it. Charlotte tried to crawl and squirm away, but it was no use. She was stuck.

WOOF! WOOF!

She heard a dog's feet patter on the floor and turned to the door that separated the girls' locker room from the hallways of the gym to see a figure of Thomas using his paws to successfully open the door.

"Thomas!

Charlotte half expected him to try to take a bite out of it. But instead, he came up to her face and began to rub his collar against her cheek. She didn't know how, but Charlotte had a feeling that he wanted her to grab it.

So she did and, to be honest, she had no idea how strong Thomas truly was!

He managed to pull her to the farthest corner of the room and behind a wall, making her invisible to anyone who came in. Then, he went to grab her towel from the bench where her clothes sat and brought it back to her, which Charlotte gratefully accepted.

Then, something popped into her head.

"Thomas," Charlotte asked hesitantly as she looked at the dog, "how did you get inside the building?"

But before she could slap herself for asking a stupid question, she heard the door open and a small "Hello?"

Charlotte's heart stopped. She knew exactly who it was.

Alaine.

"Charlotte, I know you're in here. I let your dog in and I can see your clothes on the floor. Listen, if you're scared to face me...I don't blame you."

Charlotte had no idea what she was talking about. But she was about to get her answer.

"I know you were in the stall when me and my mom were...'talking'. I saw you walk in there earlier and it was too late to warn her. I guess I wasn't the easiest person when we met. No, I was easy, but I left you hanging after I said all that stuff about being a senior and found out you're one. And I just wanted to say that I'm really sorry."

Though it sounded like Alaine meant it, but she couldn't be too sure.

"I know you also heard about the dog thing and, if you're hearing is really good...well the point is that I'm really really sorry about how I treated you and I really would like to be friends with you, but it doesn't makes sense befriending someone who's going to college next year," Alaine concluded.

Charlotte chuckled, only to quickly cover her mouth and look down at her tail

She heard Alaine's footsteps start to walk towards her and quickly yelled "STOP!"

Alaine stopped walking, letting Charlotte silently sigh in relief and smoothed out her voice.

"Alaine, I honestly don't know what to say. One part of me can't help but want to smack you for being so dense...but the other part of me can forgive you," Charlotte said from behind the wall that separated the girl from the mermaid.

"Well, why don't you come out then? It's not like I haven't seen a girl naked before," Alaine said as she slowly started to walk towards the wall again.

Charlotte was done for. She knew it. Alaine was going to see her tail, freak out, and the next thing she knows, she's going to end up on a research table!

Charlotte closed her eyes and started to mentally count down the steps coming towards her.

1...

2...

3...

WOOF! WOOF!

Charlotte heard Thomas growl and Alaine's screaming. She opened her eyes and saw that her faithful dog wasn't beside her. She didn't know how, but she managed to twist her upper body so she could see what was happening on the other side of the wall while her tail was up against the wall.

And did she owe Thomas her dinner for what she saw.

Thomas had jumped up on top of her, knocking her down in the process and started licking her. Alaine, however, was screaming her lungs off.

"Get him off! Get him off! GET HIM OFF!" Alaine screamed

Charlotte did some quick thinking and exclaimed "Thomas! Rule 1# and Rule 5#! Get off her and leave! She's not a threat! Alaine, go outside. I'll meet you at the gates in a few minutes!"

Thomas quickly got off of her and ran out the room. Alaine got up, postured herself, and gave her a silent "Thank You" before leaving the bathroom.

Hearing the sound of the door click, signaling the door closing, Charlotte turned around to lean against the wall and sighed with relief\*\*\_. \_\*\*\_That was too close, \_she thought.

\* \* \*

><p><strong><em>That night...<em>\*\*

Charlotte was up late that night, 12:00 p.m. to be specific, on her computer looking for the phone number to Paradise Cove.

After she dried herself up, doing a double-check when her tail disappeared, put on her clothes and went outside with Thomas and met up with Alaine. She apologized for Thomas's behavior and was extremely thankful that she was forgiven, though it would take awhile before warming up to her. After that, Charlotte called her mom to pick her up while Alaine's ride came and got her.

When Annette got to the school, she was scowled her for being there so late and the drive home was quiet with limited small talk. By the time they arrived home, Charlotte decided to take a long bath.

Or, in other words, she spent a good \_3 hours\_ looking at her tail. The dorsal fin was scarlet red and the tail part was a deep, sparkling, magical blue. It was exactly like the way she saw it back at Paradise Cove, only proving that she wasn't imagining anything.

\_How could I have a tail? \_she thought to herself, \_I haven't been anywhere near a moon pool nor found one at all!\_

And that was saying something was wrong. Right before she walked away from Lewis that fateful day, she told him- now she promised- that she would never go near a moon pool for the rest of her life. Meaning: Till the day she died. And even if she found one, she would do her best to keep it hidden, but never jump in it, especially on a full moon.

Now look what happened?! She somehow broke her promise and now she's a mermaid again. AGAIN! And she did NOT want it!

So, while she was searching for the number on her computer, she racked through her brain trying to figure out anything that would reverse the transformation. Suddenly, she remembered the "showdown" between her and the other mermaids. Since it was the night she lost her powers her powers, she could easily remember the planetary alignment.

Every 50 years, all the planets align with the moon. Any mermaid that was in a moon pool during this time would lose their powers forever. Though the old her would have jumped for joy and did a happy dance, celebrating the return of her tail and powers \_permanently\_, the new Charlotte was just getting back into the "normal life" routine, despite having a year of it, and didn't need them anymore.

Bingo!" she exclaimed when she found the phone number.

As she grabbed her phone and started to dial the number, she stopped. Could she really trust them? After all, they were acting strange, like they were keeping something from her. Though she didn't push on it and told Laguna what she saw. For all she knew, they all probably thought she was crazy!

Suddenly, she started to scroll down her contact list and found a

number that she should've deleted a long time ago.

A\_ really\_ long time ago.

She clicked on the number and the person on the other side answered.

"Hello?"

"Lewis, it's Charlotte. I have a situation on my hands and would you rather hear this on the phone or video chat?"

## 12. Unexpected Calls and The Legend, Part 2

**\*\*HAHA. I know! Some of you may have seen that coming, and some may not. But don't worry, Lewis won't be in this story for long. Otherwise, this would be one of the many stories on this site that add too much drama on 1 chapter. \*\***

**\*\*Read and review!\*\***

**\*\*5)For those who understood and may or may not have taken offense, please understand that though Charlotte does feel guilty about what happened btwn her and Cleo, she understood the impact she made in her life, by giving Cleo self-confidence.\*\***

\* \* \*

><p><em>Previously...<em>

\_Suddenly, she started to scroll down her contact list and found a number that she should've deleted a long time ago.\_

\_A really long time ago.\_

\_She clicked on the number and the person on the other side answered.\_

\_"Hello?"\_

\_"Lewis, it's Charlotte. I have a situation on my hands and would you rather hear this on the phone or video chat?"\_

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Present time...<strong>

"So, let me get this straight," Lewis said as the two were talking to each other through the computer screen.

They were using an international link through Skype to talk to each other, and thankfully, he was straight forward on listening to Charlotte explain her 'problem', if she could call it that. After saying hello and talking about how their lives were, \_not mentioning the girls\_, Charlotte went straight to the point and told him what happened, mainly trying to avoid an awkward moment between them.

"You're a mermaid again?! Wait! Let me do something right quick."

Lewis reached into a drawer in his desk, pulled out a flash drive, and plugged it into his computer. He waited a few minutes before talking again. "Alright, I made sure no one can try to listen in or try to hack into my laptop. \*\*( To me, computers and laptops are the same thing, so I might go back and forth) \*\*So tell me, as clearly as you can, what happened."

Charlotte started to explain the incident in the locker room the best that she could, minus what had happened with Alaine.

"I don't know how, but I was in the middle of a shower when I changed. I dropped my soap, picked it up, and ended up falling to the floor, but instead of falling on my legs, I had a tail," she said.

"But you told me you would never go near a moon pool and nevertheless, jump in one during a full moon," Lewis said, a little hurt. Normally, Charlotte would have took pity on him and all. But she wasn't having that and she was starting to get angry.

"That's the point!" she said through her gritted teeth, " I don't remember getting in one! I was like one day, I'm lying on the grass next to a broken-down bus and the next day, I'm waking up in a hospital!"

"Wait! You were in the hospital!? First of all, I need to see you change, because, for all I know, you could have hallucinated," he said.

\_How could I, \_Charlotte thought but nodded.

She locked her bedroom door and moved the computer to the end of the bed so that it looked like she was in the middle of her room. Then, she pulled out her water bottle from her gym bag and squeezed the water from the bottle and on her hand.

...Ten seconds...Twenty seconds...

Then, her body started to get encased with water that started to swirl around her and she fell to the floor, her new tail fully exposed.

Lewis, who had a front row seat and saw the thing, looked at her in shock. She recognized the look well. It was the same expression he had when she told- more like showed him the first time she was a mermaid.

"Charlotte... I swear, if I ever get to come to America, I need to pay you a visit. I don't know how, but I should be grateful that you called me the moment you found out. But why are you just changing now? Does it have anything to do with you being in the hospital?"

This got her. Is it possible the only reason she didn't change was because she was in the hospital? But that was impossible. The nurses could have given her a bath while she was unconscious. Plus, she took a shower the day she left and she didn't form a tail then.

Then, his phone rang. He looked at it with a panic expression and then looked at Charlotte , who had managed to drag herself back to

the bed.

"It's Cleo. Listen, when I can, we have- no, we need to talk. You need to tell me what happened earlier or before you got sent to the hospital. I'll try to work on this and get back to you as soon as I can."

Charlotte sighed in relief. Though no one knew this, unlike the girls, Lewis was the only one who had fully forgiven her. Plus, how would Cleo sleep at night knowing that Lewis and she still kept contact with each other.

Suddenly, something crossed her mind.

"NO! I'm sorry Lewis, but if you ever come to America for whatever reason, stay for that reason only. Don't you DARE come visit me! I mean if-"she was about to continue but Lewis stopped her.

"I know what you're trying to say. You didn't come to me with this as a lover or anything, but your coming to me as a friend, and for the fact that I'm the only mermaid researcher out there that you know. Don't worry, Charlotte. Your secret's safe with me."

She swore under her breath. If the old Charlotte heard those words, it would have made her swoon. But this Charlotte wasn't like that. She just gave him a polite smile, which he returned.

Then, his phone started to ring again.

"Thanks. Anyways, I gotta go and dry this tail off before my mom tries to come in here and Cleo gets sick of calling you and decides to pay you a visit. Bye!"

Before Lewis could say anything, she ended the chat and logged out of Skype. And right on cue, her tail disappeared and she was back in her normal clothes. The first thing she did was unlock her door and opened it, only to show Thomas sitting there, looking at her.

"Well, you coming in?"

He did and made himself comfortable as he laid down on the floor, by the foot of the bed.

She sighed as she moved her laptop and laid on the bed, staring at the white ceiling.

What was she gonna do?

Obviously, she couldn't wait for the next alignment. By the time it happened, she would be close to an old woman. \*( Ha, I make jokes to my mom about being old since she's one year away from being 50 herself!) \*\*

And now she was wondering if telling Lewis was a mistake. Sure, he had enough knowledge to help her and all, but thinking back to when she first told him she was a mermaid, the first thing he did was tell the others.

And that was one thing she knew for sure: the girls could not, in capital letters, NOT know that she's a mermaid again.

And as much as she wanted to think about herself, she was thinking about Cleo.

Charlotte could never forget how horrible she treated her, even if someone saw her point-of-view and went against the girls, she caused that herself and there was no way of taking it back.

That's truly why she returned the locket to Lewis and didn't apologize to girls directly:

She was unworthy of their presence.

Suddenly, she looked at her computer screen and saw \_it.\_

The number to Paradise Cove Caf  .

She quickly grabbed her phone and redialed the number. Maybe they'd think she was crazy...\_or maybe they were concerned about something.\_

But she knew one thing: Laguna owed her an explanation.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>That Saturday...<strong>

Phil had no problem taking her, and Thomas, to Paradise Cove. He got a new bus, though his employers had given him a time limit since the 'incident'.

After he dropped them off in the parking lot, she saw a sign with the word \_NO PETS ALLOWED \_near the beach entry\_. \_She knelt to Thomas and said "I need to go in and see someone. So, stay here and don't let anyone call animal control on you, o.k.?"

WOOF!

She scratched him behind his ear affectionately. "That's my good boy." With that, she tied him to a pole and started walking to the caf  .

\* \* \*

><p>The beach wasn't as crowded as usual, so the caf   was halfway empty. Charlotte walked up to the register to find herself greeted by Karen.<p>

"Why, Charlotte, it's been a while," she said with a smile on her face. Charlotte returned it.

"Well, I was wondering, is your mother was around?" Charlotte asked.

Karen smiled as she pointed to the outdoor patio on the side of the caf  . Charlotte turned to see Laguna's back facing her.

"She's been waiting for you," Karen said, "go talk to her. She's been out there all morning." Charlotte took her suggestion and went to join Laguna.

Laguna was staring out at the beach. From the back, her long, grayish-black hair was flowing down along her shoulders and she was wearing a plain blue dress and had no shoes on.

She looked at peace.

Charlotte started to turn away when she heard Laguna say "I've been expecting you."

\* \* \*

><p>"You know, when you told me about your 'vision', it wasn't that hard to believe," Laguna said to Charlotte as the two were seated at a table, drinking some ice-cold lemonade that Karen had brought them. Charlotte was surprised, and a little taken back.<p>

"There is a legend, well, a story you might think, that's been passed down through my family for generations. But I have one single question for you."

Charlotte was listening.

"Do you believe in mermaids?"

Charlotte did her best not to roll her eyes. \_No, I've been one for a few months last year,\_ she thought.

"No, I mean, not like the 'Little Mermaid' type, but the stories that my grandmother had told me when I was little. They made me a believer for a while."

Laguna looked at her. "Oh really. What were they about?"

Charlotte gave a fake shrug and said "They were usually about three girls who find a hidden cave with a pool of water. And during a full moon, it gave them powers and turned them into mermaids. I don't remember the powers very well, but I think it was something like wind, water, or fire or so something."

Charlotte knew what she was doing. If she played it off like she didn't care, she wouldn't sound like she was telling the truth and this discussion would be bearable.

Laguna smiled at her. "She sounds like a fine woman \_and\_ a good story-teller. Maybe I could meet her someday."

"I don't think that'll happen. She's dead."

Charlotte didn't mean to say it\_ so \_bluntly. But she wanted to avoid this topic. You see, just like the Australia incident, because she had to steal that tape from Cleo and watch it, she ended up finding out her grandmother's secrets and look where that got her!

Laguna frowned, then gave her an apologetic smile. "I'm sorry dear. I shouldn't have said that. But it really seems that she was a nice woman."

Charlotte smiled to herself a little.\_ Yes, \_she thought, \_yes she was indeed.\_



"But you got two of those right."

She looked at Laguna. "Two of what?"

"Two of the powers from her stories. In my family, we call them the Original Three: water, fire, and ice. If you'd like, I can tell you what that's got to do with the legend, if you want?" Laguna asked.

Charlotte noticed something. Unlike when they first met, Laguna had a strong, stern look on her face. This time, she had a friendly expression.

"Alright, but only since it sounds interesting," she said. Laguna smiled at her, her teeth brightly shining in the sun.

"It started a million or two years ago, when most of the earth was covered in water and water was suddenly bringing in new land? Well, that sounds wrong. Let's see... ahh. How about we start with this new 'discovery' on mermaids. Have you ever heard of it? It's mostly on an Animal something?"

Charlotte knew what she was talking about. "Animal Planet. Yeah, I saw that episode. The idea that mermaids only speak and sound like whales is kind of ridiculous."

She wasn't lying about that. On one of the many nights she had originally gone downstairs to turn off the TV that her dog was watching, she decided to join him and ended up watching "Mermaids: The Discovery". The whole concept that those were what real mermaids looked like and all was pure fiction to her and she didn't believe it.

Then again, no one would believe that she was a mermaid once.

"Well," Laguna said, "they're real."

Charlotte did her best not to look surprised as she continued.

"They're real. After the apes, as you call them, moved towards land, some moved towards the sea, and eventually, looking exactly how they were described: more fish than human. But some started to change, their tails turning to different colors and the upper part of their body looking more like a land dweller, or human if you prefer. But this was natural evolution. It couldn't be stopped. But, like many others, the Originals, as my family calls them, couldn't accept change and turned dark. We call them the Dark Ones. They tend to stay under the radar, using most of the old methods and refused to adapt like the others, who were using methods of the land dwellers, like keeping records and court dates, which was quite common actually."

Charlotte felt the urge to interrupt and did so.

"Wait, you mean to tell me that the mermaids that they're looking for are really the old ones? And what do you mean by the 'others'?" she asked.

Laguna's eyes widened and looked at her for a moment and then began to talk. Charlotte swore she had seen her eyes light up in joy for her question.

"The 'others' fit the description of the 'Little Mermaid'. They look more like a land dweller at the top and a fish tail at the bottom. And yes, humans have gone into places they have no idea the Dark Ones live, though I can't really blame them. As far as most people know, mermaids were a type of fiction that were told to kids when they go to bed at night and most hope to grow out of. So you have no way of knowing your entering dark territory."

Charlotte was surprised at this new information. She had no idea how much \_true\_ background info that mermaids had, even if this was the basics. It almost felt like she had just opened up a door to something big. Something new.

If Lewis wasn't so nice, he'd probably kill for this information. Mostly because it fills in the holes in his research.

But this wasn't what she came for and had to get to the point.

" Miss Laguna-

"Call me Laguna, dear."

"Laguna, last time I was here, you told me about a legend in response to my 'vision'. That's the main reason I'm here: I want to here it."

For a moment, the expression on Laguna's face stood still, almost looked like it was filled with darkness, and she didn't say anything. But it took a few moments before she exhaled a breath she was holding in and began to talk.

\* \* \*

><p>"I might never know of the origins of how the stories that your grandmother told you came to her, but I can say she told stories close to an old legend in my family. You see, I come from a long line of mermaid believers. We, as in my family, knew that mermaids existed, but never bothered them. Instead, we made sure that no harm came to them in any way. Though many people never believed anything about my family, every once in a while, a tail would stick out of the water for reassurance," Laguna grinned as she said that.<p>

"So, your family was like some kind of mermaid protection program?" Charlotte asked.

"Somewhat. No one knows how \_that\_ started, but my guess is that it took place after 1010 C.E., sometime before the Great War. But this is how the legend started:

Somewhere in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, there was a pod of mermaids. And inside that pod were 3 young mermaids : Marana, Ane'lie, Marana's little sister, and my namesake, Laguna. The three were some of the last mermaids to get their powers. Ane'lie, Ane for short, was a free spirit, and aside from the "Ursula" fiasco, she could have been Ariel, with that spirit and long, red hair.

Marana was sort of the leader of the group and the beauty, or so I heard. Ane would do small errands for her and did as her sister told, mostly out of love. My namesake was a little different. She was born with the ability to see the past, most likely to prevent problems in the future. She was a good friend of Marana's and a best friend to Ane. Both of them were known for playing tricks and pulling pranks. Though that constantly got them in trouble with the elders, as you teenagers say, it was totally worth it."

Charlotte chuckled.

"On the night the girls and the others got their powers, something went... awry. Marana received the ability to control fire, which was joyous for her. Laguna received the ability to manipulate water, much to her liking. But Ane... she received all three powers: fire, water, and ice. If you were there, you could tell that the pod had no idea on whether they should panic or not. No one has ever received all three powers before, especially if there were three mermaids in the pool. For a while, Ane and Laguna would use their powers, Ane had later learned to use the correct hand gestures, to play pranks on the pod as usual.

But one day, Ane wasn't looking and somehow... just on instinct, she turned around and froze a great white shark completely. Now, I don't remember well, but whether sharks were warm-blooded or cold-blooded, Ane'lie somehow managed to freeze it completely, and with one push forward, the shark literally shattered into tiny pieces of fragments."

Laguna held her hand up, made a hand gestures like Emma's, and pushed it forward. It seemed as if she was just demonstrating it until there was a loud crash behind them. The two turned around to see Brendan on the ground, wearing strange-looking gloves and picking up what appeared to be a broken plate. Charlotte pointed to the gloves and raised an eyebrow at Laguna.

"He always pricks himself, so we made him wear gloves," Laguna explained. Charlotte nodded in understanding and told her to continue.

"Laguna and Marana were there when it happened. While Laguna wanted to take Ane to the council, a mermaid council, and see if they could lessen her powers, Marana had a different plan at the time. Though Ane'lie didn't go to the council, her sister had her doing strange 'errands' at the time, a task Ane always did out of love.

However, as the years passed and the three mergirls turned into beautiful mermaids, they were starting to grow apart. Marana seemed to be getting... darker, like rebelling against the pod, breaking the rules, and many other things. Laguna didn't know what was going on with her friends. While Marana was being dark and manipulative, Ane was being secretive and mute, the exact opposite of who she really was. One night, Laguna went to face them and overheard the sisters terrible plan... to use to take control of the land dwellers."

Charlotte didn't realize how into the story she was until Laguna told her to wipe the drool from her face and continued.

"As hard as it was to believe, Marana had planned this since the shark incident. Whenever the pod found a new moon pool, Marana would force Ane into it and make her get new powers. Do you understand what I'm saying? Marana was making her own sister so powerful that it would have been unearthly of the consequences. Laguna told the council immediately and they all agreed to render her powers, for her sake.

But it was too late. On the surface on the Atlantic, Marana had ordered Ane to create a electrical storm, one that was powerful enough no one could escape. Laguna rose to the surface and saw the largest, widest waterspout she had ever see. So many black thunder clouds covered the sky that only lightning and thunder could be seen. Then lightning hit the water as well as the thunder. It seemed like a two person orchestra: like music. Ane was the musician and Marana was the composer. She tried to destroy the council by ordering Ane to strike them with lightning, and it nearly electricuted everyone. The merpeople escaped from the with their lives and even Marana abandoned ship, leaving Ane'lie to finish what she started. Ane'lie found herself creating the walls of a huge whirl pool and made the hand gestures to command the storm to head towards land.

She was all alone... execpt for Laguna. Though she didn't know how Ane was being played like a puppet, she would always be her friend. It took a great amount of time and effort for Laguna to command the water, something she practically didn't have. By the time she was close enough t talk to Ane, she begged and pleaded for her to stop. And the moment Ane'lie saw the tears running down Laguna's desprate face, she made an eternal vow, one that could never be broken."

Charlotte was so scared to ask that she wasn't sure what to do. But she had to know. "What did she vow?"

Laguna looked at her, like she was debating with herself on whether or not to tell her. But she sighed and continued.

"She specifically said:

By the power vested on myself, by the High Mermaid Council and the Moon, that I shall die at this moment but forever shall my reincarnation and decendants be land dwellers and never touch the sea forever as a merperson.

Then she look at Laguna in surprise as she made a vow too. She said:

By the power vested on myself, by the High Mermaid Council and the Moon, that I wills pend my days on lamd and sea, have children and and decendants that will help as I age to watch over Ane'lie's reincarnations and her decendants forever, to prevent the Great Storm from ever happening again.

With those vows made, the storm collasped, hiting and destroying Ane'lie and surprisingly sending Laguna far away. Ever since, she had remained on this very earth, searching for her reborn friend and protecting her. That, my dear Charlotte, is the legend of the Cove family, or as merpeople would call us, the Mermaidians."

Charlotte stared at her in awestruck. Though part of her was trying

to make a mental note to do more mermaid research, the other part of her was frozen. She now knew that there was no way that Laguna was lying to her about this. Laguna was a mermaid, or at least, her family was a group of merpeople.

But she hid it quickly and played it off. As far as she knew, her last 24 hours of being a completely normal human being was over. In fact, her last twelve months of it was over.

"It's a good thing you came to me when you did or else you would've had no idea on how to use your powers."

Charlotte looked at Laguna and quickly got up from her seat. "I'm sorry, but I think you've got the wrong idea. You see, I asked to hear the legend because-"

"Because strange things have been happening to you and you have absolutely no idea why," Laguna said, "I think that we should speak more-"

"NO!" Charlotte shouted. A few heads turned to them. To avoid the awkward moment, she leaned in close to Laguna and said "Listen, I have no idea on what the heck your talking about. I'm just an ordinary girl with a ordinary life with ordinary problems. There's nothing special about me except that I love art and I like being average."

She knew she was in denial. Denial was a normal trait. Normal was something everybody has. Normal was something she tried to be. But that was wrong.

Then, Laguna whispered to her "Your in trouble, Charlotte. Your already a pawn in her game and she won't stop playing until she gets what she wants. If you just let me help-"

Charlotte didn't want to hear it. She quickly started walking away from Laguna, not wanting to hear anymore of her "advice". She didn't want to be special. Special was bad. As in, no good, bad luck, no luck, just anything not good. She had drilled this into her head a long time ago. It's bad enough that's she's a mermaid, but now she was gonna cause more trouble than needed.

And this is NOT how she wants to spend her life.

Just as she got off the last step of the patio, she bumped into Brendan, who was carrying a crate of wet crabs. As they collided, the crate spilled, the crabs and the water pouring all over her.

"Oh, sorry. Are you o.k.?" he asked as he wiped the crabs off her and tried to help her up. But Charlotte's mind was screaming three things: water, ocean, RUN!

She got up quickly and made a mad dash as she ran to the beach and immediantly dived into the water.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>HAHA! This is the end to my <em>long<em> chapter. And you have to admit, my Animal Planet facts mixed with the world oh H20: GENIUS!\*\*

**\*\*The next chapter is shortly after Charlotte dives into the water.\*\***

**\*\*READ AND REVIEW!\*\***

### 13. Reassurance and Revelations

**\*\* New chapter is up! ENJOY AND BE AMAZED AT THE FEELING YOU'VE HAD NO IDEA CHARLOTTE FELT WHEN SHE LEFT!\*\***

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Previously...<strong>

\_Charlotte didn't want to hear it. She quickly started walking away from Laguna, not wanting to hear anymore of her "advice". She didn't want to be special. Special was bad. As in like, no good, bad luck, no luck, just anything not good. It's bad enough that's she's a mermaid, but now she was gonna cause more trouble than needed.\_

\_And this is NOT how she wants to spend her life.\_

\_Just as she got off the last step of the patio, she bumped into Brendan, who was carrying a crate of wet crabs. As they collided, the crate spilled, the crabs and the water pouring all over her.\_

\_"Oh, sorry. Are you o.k.?" he asked as he wiped the crabs off her and tried to help her up. But Charlotte's mind was screaming three things: water, ocean, RUN!\_

\_She got up quickly and made a mad dash as she ran to the beach and immediately dived into the water.\_

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Present Time...<strong>

\_Great,\_ Charlotte thought,\_ now I'm back on the "no-touching-water" policy, AGAIN!\_

She started to swim deeper into the ocean. She needed to get to dry land quick and find a way to dry off.

Then, she heard a voice.

\_Move to the boulders\_

\_Move to the boulders...\_

That voice. It was helping her?

Charlotte did what it said and swam to the surface. She saw a few boulders at the edge of the beach. They were large enough to hide her. She went back underwater and swam towards the rocky shore.

A few minutes later, she dragged herself behind the boulders and hid her tail as best she could. She looked at it and noticed something strange.

For some reason, her tail was glistening and changing colors. Her dorsal fin was changing from scarlet red to violet to red again and her tail was changing from its deep magical blue to indigo to blue again.

\_Wierd\_, she thought.

WOOF! WOOF!

Charlotte turned her head and saw Thomas effortlessly climbing over the boulders, trying to get to her. And by the looks of it, he snapped his leash off. By the time he got to her, Charlotte gave him a scowl.

"Thomas! I told you to wait for me! Why don't you listen?!" she exclaimed. However, he took offense of this and kept barking at her.

WOOF! WOOF!

"Stop Thomas! I said STOP!" Charlotte exclaimed, trying to stop him from attracting anybody and she did not plan on ending up in an aquarium or a laboratory anytime soon. But he kept on barking.

WOOF! WOOF!WOOF!WOOF!WOOF!

Suddenly, Charlotte made her hands form a closed fist and threw them into the ground hard.

"STOP!"

Almost immediately, a huge fire started to aflame aside her. Charlotte jumped, but since she was in her mermaid form, she couldn't go far. Then, she looked at her hands.

"Did I just do that?" she muttered to herself. Then, she noticed that her hands were still closed and remembered something.

This was Rikki's hand gesture.

She looked at the fire, then her hands, and looked at the fire again. Carefully, she opened her hand towards the fire and pulled it back, like she was pulling something towards her.

The fire disappeared.

Starting to feel giddy, a feeling that she hadn't felt in a year, she concentrated as she put her closed hand near her tail and watched as it got covered in steam and disappeared, leaving her dry and back in her original clothes.

She couldn't believe it. She had gotten her one of her old powers back. What did she do? Jump into a moon pool with similar powers or something? Though part of her, probably the old Charlotte, was doing a happy dance as she was felt the magical surge flowing through her again, the new Charlotte was terrified.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>That night at Paradise Cove...<strong>

Laguna was pacing back and forth in the family office, having a "discussion" with her family.

And by "discussion", they were talking about their new favorite topic at the moment: Charlotte.

"I'm... I'm... I can't even begin to describe how today went! One moment, I'm telling her what could be her past and the next thing I know, she's talking and going on about being average and ordinary! ORDINARY! That's the last thing she doesn't have time for! And you heard your son, Karen. It usually takes 10 seconds for the transformation to occur. It took Charlotte longer to change! I swear-"

"Mother!" Karen interrupted rudely, "I think your going at this the wrong way! I mean, you can't blame her! Denial is what makes a person human. And just hearing that you're a reincarnation of a mermaid, one that almost tried to destroy civilization, well, not only is that unbelievable, it's really hard to deal with, even IF she believes it! And what's so wrong about being ordinary? The idea of having friends, going to the mall and having to be invited to parties with kids your own age, and having a boyfriend for Pete's sake!

Compared to being a mermaid, land dwellers have it well, especially when their teenagers. When you're a mermaid, you have to \_choose\_ your friends and HOPE that you don't have to go through betrayal, you can't go anyplace fun without hoping that one drop of water won't touch you, and having a boyfriend... I'm not even going to name the horrors of that. But being a mermaid and dating is probably the most deadliest thing close to being experimented on in a laboratory or on display in an aquarium. And \_so what \_if it took 20 seconds to change? For the moment, she's lucky."

Jonathan and Brendan just sat on the couch and watched as the two women argued in silence. Karen was usually the one to keep her cool when her mother was ranting. But it seems that tonight, the tables were turned. Both were shouting at each other and everything.

"Soo, who's side are you on?" Brendan asked his step-father quietly.

"Easy. I'm on my own team," Jonathan replied as he watched the women fight.

"First of all, young lady, if it took her longer to change, then she going to be used for deadly, and it always is, " Laguna said, "secondly, ordinary means trouble! You think she can have fun, like go to a \_pool party\_ and \_not \_get wet? Or what if she does get a boyfriend? Don't you know that trusting a land dweller with the secret is practically suicide?! Every mermaid that gives up the secret is practically endangering every mermaid that has tried to stay hidden, whether they live on land or in a pod!

Heck, do you know how many of your 'suitors' I couldn't trust for the sake of our safety? Even Brendan's father, damn that man to hell, could have reported us the moment he found out that he \_helped \_sired a merman with a mermaid and we would've ended up in a laboratory or something! And \_she\_'s rising-"



"Mother! I've kept up this charade for long enough and I have to say it: It's Marana! The mermaid you were once friends with, the mermaid that needed an attitude adjustment, the mermaid who turned and used her little sister into a weapon of mass destruction, the mermaid who fled from her sister to avoid her own undoing, and the mermaid who possibly has complete control of Charlotte!

Think about her, Mother. Any moment, at any time, Marana could get into her head and Charlotte could never know what she was going to do! Mother," Karen pleaded, "Charlotte is, in her own way, just a girl. A girl that doesn't need to be told that a mermaid has possible mind control over her or that the fate of the world is in her hands, or a tail. She just doesn't know what world she just entered. Just give her some time to get used to it. She just needs time."

Laguna looked at her daughter. She had lived for many centuries and Karen proved to be the only one to go as far as begging. Karen started to cry and stress, which was something a 7 month old pregnant woman didn't need. Karen begged for only two things in her life: the first was to not go after Brendan's biological father after he left her 18 and pregnant and the second time was when she begged her for her blessing to marry Jonathan, a man who she thought was supposed to never show any love towards anyone, let alone Karen. Those decisions made her who she was Today. And now she was begging ,no, pleading for something to happen under her own mother's agenda.

As Laguna turned away to leave the office, she said "She'll come when she wants to. But if Marana starts controlling her too soon, I'm finding that girl's address and dragging her down here against her will."

As she left, Karen sighed in relief. Despite just meeting Charlotte, she had already begun to like her. She wasn't sure why, but she just did.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>At Charlotte's house...<strong>

Lewis managed to get back to her and through a secure Skype link, Charlotte told him the legend and everything.

"Amazing! I never thought of the connection. And though there's obviously more to the history, I think you can trust her," Lewis said.

"Really? Trust a crazy woman who just claimed to be almost as old as Earth with... you know. And if you forgot, I spent almost a year as an ordinary girl. I don't need a legend, much less, a tail, to destroy that. I'm a normal, ordinary girl who has a life to live you know," Charlotte said.

"You can still live your life and be normal. All you have to do avoid touching water in places like pool parties and beaches, unless you plan on taking a swim by yourself. It can't be that hard."

"Lewis, don't you remember what I did to, oh, I don't know, be 'normal' ?" Charlotte asked sarcastically.

There was a pause for a moment.

"Yeah, I thought so."

And Lewis answered. "And what's so great about being normal. Just being an average, ordinary, normal girl?"

Charlotte was quick to point out the pros and cons to that question.

"Easy, when your not a mermaid, you have: normal high school problems, make friends and enemies easily, go to pool parties and have fun, at least try to get some bonding done with your parents, go to college and get a normal college experience like the others, and get a boyfriend and break up over and over again un til you find yourself wearing a long, white dress, walking down the aisle and saying 'I Do'!"

When you are a mermaid: you have absolutely no idea if your friends are your enemies and your enemies are your friend, can't go to any water-rated social activities and have fun without getting wet and running for your life, can't tell your parents a thing about it, I don't think I can name the horrors of college, and for a boyfriend... you would either face rejection or be called a freak, end up on human display in an aquarium, or find yourself being cut open on a lab table! So, to sum it up, my life would be ruined as a mermaid and I can't live my life like that!"

For a moment, Charlotte turned away from the screen. She felt her eyes watering up and felt like crying. Didn't the universe know that she learned her lesson! She suffered from depression, and possibly still is, had a shitty life for the rest of her Junior year of high school, got herself admitted to the hospital, and finding that she had a tail again was the worst thing that could happen now!

She was insanely depressed and tired of living as a result.

By the time she looked at the screen, Lewis could visibly see that she was about to cry and looked at her in concern.

"Charlotte... are you crying?" he asked her carefully. This was an entirely new view for him. He had never seen her cry and it broke his heart a little. To be honest, he expected her to cry when she lost her powers to the girls, and though he wasn't sure of it, he still wondered if she cried herself to sleep afterwards and when she gave back the locket, she didn't even shed a tear. **\*(1)\***

Though the others would kill him for thinking this, when he asked for the locket back, he thought he was overstepping his boundary there. After all, despite the locket being given to Cleo by Miss Catham, its original owner was Charlotte's grandmother, Gracie Watsford, one of the mermaids 50-no 100 years ago, if you count the moon occurence last year.

So, taking away Cleo and the abuse of Charlotte's powers, the locket was practically Char's birthright that had missed a generation and was given to her, taking away that she actually stole it, but still. He saw the hurt and pained expression that she had when she returned it, and for a little while, it bothered him.

Finding out Gracie's past and literally living it out had given Charlotte more of a connection to her, and after losing her powers, that locket was all she had left and by giving it back, all she had left were memories of her. And now that Cleo switched lockets with Emma and practically forgot about it, he wondered, if she still had it, would she notice it went missing, saying that it probably got lost but it was actually sent to Charlotte? **\*\*(2)\*\***

But knowing this Charlotte and the present moment, by the time it got to her, in two weeks tops or more, he would open his front door, find a package, open it, and find the locket returned untouched along with a note saying if he tried it again she might consider swimming all the way to Queensland just to actually attempt to kill him. **\*\*(3)\*\***

"You know what Lewis?" Charlotte asked, causing him to break out of his thoughts and look to see her tears slowly falling down her cheeks, "some things are just worth crying over! Why don't you tell the others that! I'm so sure Rikki and the others would love to see me so upset, or better, crying over them like the wicked witch that I am!

After all, I practically tried, and almost successfully, ruined Cleo's life, possibly hurt a potential relationship between Emma and some boy she liked, yes I noticed that, and pretty much got on Rikki's last nerve and deserved every wave of emotional abuse that she sent me! Admit it Lewis! I'm the bad guy! I'm the evil villainess that ran away home crying and let the good guys have a well deserved happy ending!

The water princess got her knight in shining armor, her locket, and her life back, the ice princess kept her tail and her guy, and the fire princess never had to deal with the evil witch ever again. All well it ends well, doesn't it! I mean, look at me!

My only friends are a dog and possibly my bully, I rarely paint or have anything to do with art, my mom is rarely home and when she is, she ignores me, I've been hospitalized twice and..and... I'm a mess, a nobody, a loser and that's all I'll ever be! If I get one, one, good thing, something bad happens, and I'm lost! You.. your special! You have a mermaid for a girlfriend, have mermaid friends that you do 'tests' on, your smart like crazy, you.. you.. you guys are the special ones! The ones with a purpose in live! I'm...I'm a waste of space..."

And that's when the water works started.

She busted into tears and started to let out soft wails, something that kept her from completely losing all her bearings. A stream of tears came pouring down her face, but no matter how much she wiped them or how quickly she did, the tears kept falling.

But what shocked and shook her to her core was that she was spilling her guts out to a guy whose supposed to be against her and she started to cry harder.

Man, she was pathetic.

But Lewis...so many emotions were going through him that, he knew that the next words that he said might dictate whether or not the

next time he hears from her, it's a funeral invite.

"Charlotte Watsford!" he growled, catching her attention, "don't you dare think like that! To be honest, I'm taking away every reason from last year and stating this: Charlotte Watsford, don't even think about killing yourself! You not a loser, or a nobody, or whatever you just called yourself! Believe me when I say this, nobody is perfect. Everybody is born with a unique trait that everybody loves. Take away everything that happened between you and the girls, I believe that you are just born one of the few people who have good sides and bad sides. For example, from the moment we met and the moment we last saw each other in person, I knew that the girl I met on her first day of school and the girl that I saw loses her powers were two separate people.

Yeah, maybe you did go a little crazy, and I'm using that term politely, but that crazy girl wouldn't have tried to make like you did. That girl wouldn't have given up that locket like you did, she didn't try to move on like you did, and as a result, this happened. And you think my life is normal?! Yes, I have a mermaid for a girlfriend, and her friends are mermaids too, but do you think that's easy!? On full moons, I get my butt kicked before and after they see it, the \*\*\_no-touching-water-policy\_\*\* can get way out of hand and you would NOT believe how many close calls we've had when Rikki's not around to help, after a few days since Emma went away for her family's European trip, there's already another girl their hanging out with!

My point is that you are unique and were born to do something great and from what I'm hearing, it seems that Fate has watched over you and decided that you were ready to have your tail back. Maybe in some twisted way, you were born to do some special task and if it requires you to have a tail, then it means that your truly ready to redeem yourself. And that's reason you can't be normal. Because, no matter what you do, you will never be normal. Your... a treasure."

Charlotte stared at him. Halfway through his speech, she had stopped crying. Those had been the best words that anyone has spoken to her so far, in a day in her life. She wiped away the remaining tears and smiled.

"Lewis, you're a philosopher."

Lewis smiled. "No, I'm just your average, normal mermaid researcher and expert. Though, if I didn't have Cleo, I'd be-

"A dead man in a lonely sea grave with nothing to do," Charlotte teased. Lewis made a goofy face and was about to retort when her vision fades to black...

\* \* \*

><p><em>A storm. That was what the sky looked like. The sky held grey clods that heavily rained and unleashed lightning and thunder. As the storm clouds grew darker, almost black, flashes of lightning bolts appeared everywhere.<em>

Charlotte looked around. She could see the sky, but saw walls of water circling around her, the size of the Hoover Dame. Se held up a

closed fist and opened it towards the side of the rushing water. A lightning bolt appeared and hit the side of the whirlpool, she assumed she was in the middle of, causing the pool to become electrically charged.\_

\_Charlotte smiled. She felt an extremely powerful surge of magic flow through her. And then she moved the clouds with a wave of her hand, not only moving the clods but creating a waterspout on the outside and a tornado on the inside.\_

\_Then, the moon came into view. It was glowing electric blue in all its glory and she knew what she had to do. She raised her hand to the sky, in the moon's direction. She knew what she needed to do.\_

\_Then, she heard a small cry.\_

\_"Ana'lie...STOP!"\_

\_She turned around and saw a young woman-no, young mermaid with black hair and blue eyes, manipulating the electrically charged water as she made an effort to come towards her. Her face was tear-stained and it broke Charlotte's heart.\_

\_"STOP!" the mermaid screamed, "you don't have to do this! You don't have to listen and bow to your sister's every will! You can fight this and end all of this madness!"\_

\_"I can't!" Charlotte yelled, "If I try, I would lose everything that I trained for and all of my sister's love and trust in me. To have more powers than any merperson and be in control of them. We merpeople shall not be harmed by any land dwellers!"\_

\_"But that's not your dream, it's hers! She's using you, Ane. If she really loved you, she wouldn't have left you to die! And even if you lived, you would be hunted down, exiled, or worse, there'll be no more merpeople in general if you let her win! PLEASE, you were blessed to use these powers. Don't abuse them!"\_

\_Charlotte looked at the mermaid's face and looked around. There was not a merperson in sight, except for those two. Everything was so dark... empty. The mermaid was pleading at the mercy of her friend to stop her plan.\_

\_Her friend...her...sister?\_

\_How could she be so stupid?\_

\_Her best friend. The one who always helped her with pranks since they were mergirls. The one who saw what she did to that shark and wanted to have her powers rendered for her sake. The one who she avoided under the command of her sister. The only one who had the power to face her at this time instead of fleeing for her own good.\_

\_She was Charlotte's true sister.\_

\_Charlotte looked up at the moon. It was giving off a powerful aura that she knew would decide everyone's fate.\_

\_And she knew what it was.\_

\_She had to make a vow.\_

\_She raised her hand to the moon and said "By the power vested on myself, by the High Mermaid Council and the moon..." she knew what she was about to say next would change everything, but it had to be said, "that I shall die at this moment, but shall forever will my reincarnations and my descendants live as land dwellers and never touch the sea as a merperson FOREVER!"\_

\_There was a loud thunder-clap after her vow was made.\_

\_It was eternal.\_

\_As she readied herself for her ultimate sacrifice, she heard her 'sister's voice and completely unexpected words.\_

\_"By the power vested on myself, by the High Mermaid Council and the moon, that I will spend my days on land and sea, have children and descendants that will help me as I age to watch over Ane'lie's reincarnations and descendants to prevent the Great Storm from ever happening again!"\_

\_Ane'lie?\_

\_Charlotte looked at the mermaid who, despite her tear-stained face, was smiling at her.\_

\_She smiled back, knowing that they will never be separated again.\_

(THUNDER CLAPS)

\_Charlotte closed her hand towards herself and looked at the moon. It was glowing dangerously blue, due to too much power from the two vows.\_

\_She looked at the mermaid and whispered,\_

\_"Goodbye, my sister."\_

\_She opened her hand and lightning, combined with the moon's energy, immediately struck her.\_

\_All fades to black...\_

\* \* \*

><p>"Charlotte!Charlotte!...CHARLOTTE!" Lewis yelled.<p>

Charlotte snapped out of her trance and looked at Lewis, whose face was filled with panic and anger.

"Charlotte, what happened? Do you know or have any idea how much trouble you nearly gave me?! While you were having some sort of 'black out', my mom almost walked in and saw you! And believe me, if she saw me talking to you, she'd tell Cleo and it's all over!"

But she wasn't listening. Instead, she asked Lewis to do something

for her.

"Lewis, I have some homework for you. Look up anything to do with storms or moon occurrences recorded before or after 1010 A.C. and please tell when you can that you'll find something."

Lewis looked at her skeptically. "Sure, Char, but what does this have to do with the legend or the 'Great Storm'? And why did you space out?"

Charlotte looked at him carefully and revealed her revelation.

"I...I...I think I just had a flashback or... a memory."

His eyebrows widened a little. "Of what?"

She gulped. "The day the storm was created... and the vow."

"What vow? You didn't..." then his eyes widened in shock, "Charlotte you didn't..."

But she nodded, knowing what he meant.

"I really am Ane'lie's reincarnation."

"Wait! But if you're really her, then, if possibly, then that makes Laguna your..."

Lewis didn't need to say it. It was already confirmed.

Charlotte Watsford is the reincarnation of the mermaid, Ane'lie.

Laguna wasn't named after her namesake. She was the real Laguna and Ane'lie's guardian.

And Charlotte's life was in danger.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>WOOOO! Sorry for taking so long! I've been busy with school and all, but now, I'm back.<strong>

**\*\*Now I need your honest opinions. P.S NO BASHING CHARLOTTE!\*\***

**\*\*1. Now can you, and the haters, really see how Charlotte felt about the whole ideal?\*\***

**\*\*2. Don't hate me, but can you see the logic I put when I was writing about the locket! Because, to me, it made NO sense for Char to give it up only for Cleo to ditch it later.\*\***

**\*\*3. Can you honestly see Char strangling Lewis for sending the locket to her? LOL ;) :)\*\***

**\*\*Don't reply to me with 'good story' or 'I like it' or ect. Tell me how you honestly feel about it.\*\***

**\*\*What did you think of the flashback?\*\***

**\*\*MOST OF ALL...\*\***

**\*\*READ & REVIEW!\*\***

#### 14. Time to Come Out

**\*\*Alright, thanks for the reviews for the last chapter! Now, let's see what happens next in Charlotte's path shall we ;) \*\***

\* \* \*

><p><em>1 Month Later: September...<em>

Charlotte found herself standing outside the Paradise Cove Cafe once again.

It's been a month since, well, everything happened.

Charlotte had given herself a month of her own personal 'exile' from Paradise so that she could focus most of her energy on whatever was left of her 'normal' life and when she did return to Paradise, she would be ready to face all the craziness that would be thrown at her.

After that talk with Lewis that night and her "flashback", Lewis continuously insisted that if he had it, he could use some time from some scholarship in the States that he's applying for to come to Cali and see her.

Though her old self might have loved to have him for company, truth be told, this Charlotte let out her inner devil and threatened Cleo's life if he even dare try to cross the California border. And as evil as that may have sounded, it was either that or become subject to Cleo's thoughts of her boyfriend cheating on her.

But Lewis scoffed at her, knowing that she wouldn't do such a thing, and her decision to "change herself" goes against that.

And she had to admit, he was right.

Damn him.

But luckily he was still in Australia and he won't bother seeing her.

Plus, it wasn't like she was scared of the girls. But if they found out that she was a mermaid again, they would practically give her the death sentence, and knowing Rikki's temper, she wouldn't mind delivering it, personally.

Plus, and this thought came to her again and surprised the heck out of her: How would Cleo sleep at night knowing that her EX-rival was a mermaid again, and, nevertheless, talking to her boyfriend?

As far as Charlotte was concerned, as long as the girls didn't know, she and everyone else didn't lose their heads.

But some good news came, along with the bad.



1.) Charlotte got on the softball team, much to everyone's surprise, except Alaine's.

\_The week after she found out her startling revelation, she was walking into her school when Alaine rushed up to her with a smile she was sure couldn't have fit her face and was dragged to the bulletin board. The girls who tried out saw her coming as made a path for her, like she was royalty or something.\_

\_"Alaine, what's going on?" she asked.\_

\_"Look who made the team!" Alaine said excitedly.\_

\_Charlotte let go of her hand and read the set list.\_

\_"\*\*AFTER A TOUGH VOTE, WE ARE PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THE NEW SHIELD MAIDIENS TO OUR SOFTBALL FAMILY:\*\*"\_

\*\*\_Alaine Williams\_\*\*

\*\*\_Clari Mills\_\*\*

\*\*\_Charlotte Watsford-\_"\_\*\*

\_Wait what?\_

\_Charlotte turned around and all the girls started to hug her, screaming "congrats" or "good job" to her. It was nice and suffocating at the same time. At least she had a good idea on why Rikki can be so cold.\_

\_"Girl, I think coach saw that, though you needed a little work on your throwing, you could be a good addition to the team," Alaine said, "so, all you need to do is manage your schedule well and there we'll see how good you are at your first game!"\_

\_After everyone was done either cheering for the fact they survived try-outs or being cheered up for not making the team, the bell rung and they all went to class.\_

2.) Her first choir recital was coming up, much to her mother's joy.

\_Somehow, and someone, had videotaped Charlotte's audition and sent it to her mom. To be honest, she thought that telling her mom herself about the recital would spark her interest, and by interest, she meant overly joyous and proud. But someone took the honor of video-taping her audition and sent it to her mom's cell phone. And Charlotte was completely clueless about the thing.\_

\_One day, when she got home from school, she took the leash from Thomas's collar, since she knew he wouldn't run away, and opened the front door to her house. She saw that her mom's car was in the driveway, so she knew that Annette would be inside the house.\_

\_"Mom?" she yelled as she entered the house, "where are you? I've got something exciting to tell you!"\_

\_But her mom didn't answer. Instead, she found a not on the wall that read:\*\* GO TO LIVING ROOM\*\* and a huge arrow pointing the way. Charlotte looked at Thomas and followed the arrows. \_

\_When they entered the living room, they found Annette sitting on the couch, but in her hand was, a denim-covered journal with the words \*\*CHAR-MAZING\*\* written in some type of red fabric on it and, to her astonishment, an acoustic guitar with a velvet-red cover on it!\_

\_"Mom..."Charlotte said in shock. As much as she loved her mom, this gift was something she didn't even know they could afford.\_

\_"You know, " her mom said, getting up from her seat, "when you told me that you were in choir, to be honest, I thought you were a back up singer. But when I got sent a video from someone unknown saying to watch and listen, I could not believe that my little girl was had a voice like that, and definitely could not believe that she put together such a beautiful song. \_

\_So, I took a trip to a music store, and thanks to a really good employee there, I decided to get you a guitar and a personally song journal. \_The words on the journal were ironed on, but the guitar came as it is. I know that I haven't been good mom lately, but I want to make it up to you. So, here you go. All we need to do is add a lock for the journal and put the strings on the guitar and tune it up. What do you think?"\_

\_Charlotte looked at her. As much as she loved her mom, she didn't think that buying her anything was needed to show it. She just needed her to be around.\_

\_She grabbed the gifts from her mother's hand and hugged Anette.\_

\_"THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!" she screamed in delight, "and it's funny you got me something music related. How would you like to be at my first recital?"\_

To clearly state it, her mom would see her sing in person.

And 4.) Much to Lewis's pestering, and accidentally using her power to burn stuff, she found out what her powers were.

\_While Charlotte's mom was out of the house for the day, Charlotte decided to test her powers. Lewis was away from his town for the day, so he decided to grab his laptop and use video chat at the hotel he was staying at.\_

\_Charlotte brought in a small, water-filled pot from the kitchen. Lewis was watching from the end of the bed, so he had enough view to see her 'demonstration', as he called it.\_

\_"Alright," Lewis said,"are you ready to begin? All you have to do is put the pot on the table." He was shaking nervously.\_

\_Charlotte, however, was trying to slow her heart beat. This was her fourth time, or whatever, who's counting, testing her powers. Since the other times didn't go so... well, this had to do.\_

\_She gently put the pot on a table she brought out from the coat closet and looked at the computer screen.\_

\_"O.k., now what?" she asked.\_

\_"Try to mimic the hand motions that the girls make. You told me how you hit the sand with your hands closed and a fire started. So, that's Rikki's hand motion. So, and don't be afraid for this, but try to copy Cleo's hand motion," he said.\_

**\*\*Why don't you tell me to go get hit by a bus\*\***,\_ Charlotte thought.\_

\_After taking a deep breath, she did the hand motion. She opened her right hand into a claw gesture and turned it to the pot. Then, she raised her hand up. She closed her eyes and tried to draw in all the concentration she could muster.\_

\_Lewis watched through the screen as the water rose out of the pot in her will. Charlotte opened her eyes and was surprised at what she was doing, but did her best to keep focus.\_

\_"Well\_ **\*\*that's\*\*** a relief," Lewis said, masking his nervous tone with a sarcastic once, "you have Cleo's powers again. Now try Emma's."\_

\_Then, Charlotte opened her hand and form a "STOP" hand gesture and the water pillar immediately froze, as if she was doing it on instinct.\_

\_"Alright, you've got Emma's. Now, try doing Rikki's."\_

\_Charlotte closed her hand at the frozen pillar and watched as the pillar immediately started to steam up until it was no longer there and the pot was fill with water like before, only it was hot.\_

\_"And you have Rikki's. So, as far as my guess goes, you somehow ended up in a moon pool that brought back your original powers. But I noticed that each powers was quicker than the others," Lewis concluded.\_

\_Suddenly, an idea struck her.\_

\_"Hey! Watch this!"\_

\_She put her hand in a claw motion and caused the water to rise up again and form a ring around her.\_

\_"Charlotte, what are you doing?" He asked. But Charlotte wasn't done yet.\_

\_When all the water was completely out, she started to imagine the body of a dancing octopus. And almost immediately, the ring formed a little ball and took the form of a dancing octopus like she imagined.\_

\_"Oh, so your powers are tied to your imagination? Funny," Lewis said in a sarcastic, teasingly way.\_

\_But she surprised both of him and herself. She made her hand into a

fist, thinking it would evaporate, but instead of heating it, the octopus turned into a crystal-hard figurine. The octopus fell from the air and Charlotte quickly caught in her hand just in time. She left from behind the table and hopped on the bed to show Lewis.\_

\_"So, what do you think just happened?" she asked, showing her figurine to him through the screen.\_

\_Lewis didn't saw anything. He just looked at her in shock. It wasn't like the expression he wore when he saw her tail-no, tails. But it was of pure shock.\_

\_"Lewis? Lewis, are you okay?" she asked him. She saw him mutter something and asked him to repeat that.\_

\_"Um, Charlotte," he said extremely nervous, "do you remember when I told you about the new girl who the girls started hanging out with?"\_

\_"Yeah, you did mention her. She came after Emma left, which surprised me that the girls would already replaced her, but she's human. It just won't work out," she said.\_

\_Lewis gulped. That was her opinion and he respected that, but she thought that Bella was normal? He wasn't sure how to explain this to Charlotte. After all, he could tell that she was trying to change herself for the better. But how do you tell your ex-girlfriend, who used to be a power-hungry mermaid who lost her tail, that she might received a power that came from a different moon pool?\_

\_Well, he was going to say it. Just really fast.\_

\_"Well, um, Charlotte, you  
\_\_see...thenewgirlisamermaidwhostepedintoamoonpoolwhenshewasnineandbecauseshewasinanemptymoonpool,likeyoushehasthreepowersandyoujustdidoneofherpowers!"Lewis said really, really fast.\*\*(1)\*\*\_

\_To be honest, he hoped that she didn't understand him. You see, compared to Charlotte, Bella was only able to get into the 'club', as he called it, because she was already a mermaid, and she didn't have a crush on any of the girls' boyfriends. Plus, with Emma gone, she had easily fitted in. And with Charlotte trying to change herself, he knew that her old self could easily pop up and go on a somewhat well deserved rampage.\_

\_But, apparently, Charlotte was full of hidden talents.\_

\_"Mermaid expert who happens to be my ex-boyfriend say WHAT!"Charlotte exclaimed, clearly outraged.\_ \*\*(For those who are former Hannah Montana fans, you know what tone she used ;)\*\*

\_Yep, despite how fast he said it, she heard him crystal clear.\_

\_Lewis was on high alert and quickly tried to calm her down.\_

\_"Now, Char, I-I know it seems a little unfair to you," \*\*that's an understatement\*\*, "and maybe it was for the better,"\*\*no, it wasn't\*\*, "and besides, Emma's gone, so of course they added her to

the group."\_

\_Lewis earned himself the death penalty.\_

\_Charlotte's eyes started to twitch and she started to grit her teeth as her face started to turn red. The octopus fell to the floor as she put her hands by her side and started to mentally count to 20...then 19...then 18...then 17...then 16...then 15...14...13...12...11...\_

\_10...\_

\_She knew how she was about to react.\_

\_9...\_

\_This response was very irrational.\_

\_8...\_

\_The girl she left in Australia was about to come out...\_

\_7...\_

\_and she was doing her best to keep her down.\_

\_6...\_

\_The other girls had no right to replace Emma.\_

\_5...\_

\_And they had no right to accept a new girl in!\_

\_4...\_

\_Her eyes started to blink and twitch fast.\_

\_3...\_

\_"Um' Charlotte? I think I should log out before you start to...um...bye!" Lewis quickly said. \_\_Then, the screen went black.\_

\_2...\_

\_Then, the screen went black.\_

\_1...\_

\_And thankfully, it was just in time.\_

\_'Why...those...little...'Charlotte said through her hard, gritted teeth and then busted into a large screaming outburst at the top of her lungs and started to swear words no one thought she knew that echoed all through the house.\_

\_And poor Thomas, who was outside her open door and hid under

Annette's bed until Charlotte stopped screaming. \_\*\*(2)\*\*

Safe to say, Lewis didn't hold her outburst against her and, thankfully, was still talking to her. He told her about the other two powers the new girl, that's what Lewis called Bella for Charlotte's sake, and urged her to practice them, which resulted into more aquatic animal figurines. He told her that the new girl's powers were close to Cleo's, but could turn anything into jelly.

"Well, at least I can learn to make Jell-O easily," Charlotte joked after hearing this.

And now, here she was, standing outside the Paradise Cove Cafe, ready to face the wrath of an old, \_old\_ woman.

\_Who just so happens to be your guardian,\_ she thought.

She took a deep breath and started walking towards the cafe. The place was busy as usual. The tables were filled with families, couples, friends, and basically anybody who loved the beach. There was so much active chatter, music, and anything else she didn't notice herself bumping into anyone until she was on the floor, holding her forehead on where a bump was about to form.

"Oh! I'm \_so \_sorry, miss, I didn't look where I was going!" exclaimed a male voice as she saw him reach his hand out to her from the corner of his eye.

Still holding her forehead, Charlotte used her other hand to take his as he helped her up.

"No, your fine. I should have paid attention and-

She didn't finish her sentence.

She looked up to see the guy in front of her looking deep into her eyes and she couldn't help but do the same.

He had the body of a surfer dude, minus the 3 inch difference from her height, and had the built up abs seen through his blue and red shirt. His hair was in a similar style like Lewis's from the previous year, but only it was more curlier and black. His eyes were brownish-black too, though it must have been just her, but it was a beautiful brown, like the type of dark chocolate that you would instantly indulge and melt into. His skin was slightly tanned, but it wasn't pale or pink either. It was in between and hard to tell. It looked nice on him.

"Riley! Stop staring at that girl with your bipolar self and get back to work!" someone shouted from behind them.

The two jumped back from each other, breaking them from their trance and caused them to blush \_(3)\_. They turned around to see Laguna staring at Riley, which seemed to be the guy's name, with a stern look on her face, but then looked surprised when she saw Charlotte.

"Charlotte? Well, what a surprise. I didn't expect you to come by," she said.

Getting out of the "awkward" moment, Riley said "Excuse me, Miss Cove. I'll get going," and, with that, left the café after taking one last look at Charlotte.

Both of the young women watched him leave until he was out of sight. Then, Laguna turned to Charlotte.

"I hoped I saved you some trouble there. Though Riley can be a gentleman, he... has his, um, \_days\_ where he shouldn't be around anyone."

Charlotte turned to her and looked at her with a surprised expression on her face.

"Oh! Me-him-us-together? Sorry, but I'm not interested in dating at the moment or any time soon. But I came in looking for you! You see... I know you, at some point, were my best friend," Charlotte said, "a month ago, I had, or at least I think it was, a flashback. It was during a storm and... I heard you call me Ane-"

"Get into the office! Now!" Laguna whispered angrily. Her face looked angry, but her eyes were filled with panic. She pointed towards the back of the back of the kitchen and Charlotte went in there, with Laguna hot on her heel.

\* \* \*

><p>When they got in there, Laguna quickly called in her family . Soon enough, they were all seated around her, like little kids waiting to hear a story. Laguna was the first to say something.<p>

"Charlotte, on the behave of my daughter, I was...advised to let you have some time to yourself, but now it's time to get serious. Tell us \_exactly \_what you saw."

Charlotte took a deep breath and retold her "flashback". She told them about the storm, the vows, and the lightning strike that "killed" her.

Laguna shook her head as soon as she finished. "I don't know what to think. But she's quickly gaining on you. She \_knows \_you. She knows your strengths, your weaknesses, and everything else. As far as I'm concern, for every time you were reborn, something about you stays the same. But I can't help but ask, when did everything start to become 'abnormal' to you?"

\_Do you want me to start at last year or early on, \_Charlotte was tempted to say but held her tongue.

"It all started the day I moved here, the first day I came to Paradise Cove. And, if I remember right, it was shortly, maybe a few hours, after I passed out from receiving the 'vision' from Laguna. That night, I was out on the pier. I heard a voice calling to me, telling me to '\_come\_' to it. It got me as far to have me jump off the pier and almost drowned. At first, it was like a trance and I liked it. But the horn from the bus that drove me here broke of the trance. After that, I hurried out the water and went home."

The Cove's eyes widened in shock.

"\_She's\_ been after you since the moment you moved to California!" Karen said, "I swear, Mother, she never works that fast! Even if it wasn't her reincarnation, \_she\_ usually waited at least a week before possessing someone's mind. But \_she\_ tried-no, \_she's\_ already controlling you when you only spent a few hours here. How is that even possible?"

"I have a theory," Laguna said, "one that none of us are going to like."

Everyone looked at her in expectation. Charlotte just wanted to know what the heck all of this had to do with her being a damn mermaid! After all, she doesn't even know how she even ended up in a moon pool in the first place!

"I believe that...that \_she\_ \_knew\_ that Charlotte was Ane'lie's reincarnation before we did. Possibly, she could have watched her since the day she was born. For all we even know, she could have known that Charlotte was Ane'lie for almost 18 years and had given us Potentials so that we wouldn't even come close to finding her."

Everyone stared at her in shock. From what Charlotte could tell, this was \_extremely\_ \_bad\_ news and even she wasn't that thrilled that an evil mermaid has watched her.

"Mother! You honestly believe that we've been on a wild goose chase for a girl who might've been easy to find?!" Karen exclaimed.

"Because she wanted to be sure of something. Something that would have made sure she could be easily controlled." Then Laguna turned to Charlotte.

"Dear, I'm going to ask you an important question and I need the truth."

Charlotte was petulantly listening.

"Until recently, had you ever, ever been a mermaid before?"

Oh boy. She couldn't lie her way out of this one, but they didn't need to know the entire truth.

"Yes. When I was 16, I found out something my grandmother, Gracie. Turns out, that along with her friends, she was a mermaid," Charlotte confessed.

"It makes sense. Your grandmother was a mermaid, so of course Ane'lie's reincarnation would follow in her footsteps. But how were you not a mermaid until now?"

This part made her nervous. Of course it was crucial to know why, but she couldn't tell them about the girls. So, she told it in a simple way.

"She gave up her powers during an eclipse that came every 50 years. She was tired of being special, so she gave it up, got married later, had my mom who gave birth to me. So, in a way, I almost missed being



a mermaid by a generation. But, at some point, I found and jumped into a moon pool.

At first, I was anxious about what my powers were and then I found out that I could manipulate water, freeze it, and had thermal heat powers, along with weather powers."

Everyone was shocked, except for Karen's husband, Jonathan. Laguna looked worried, like she was a girl that knew her friend's husband was cheating on her and she was scared to tell that friend the truth.

"Alright, so we know the what and how in this story, now what's the \_WHY\_? WHY didn't you still have you powers when we all met? Did you give them up like your grandmother or something?" he asked, surprising everyone around him. They had no idea he was so into her explanation.

The, Charlotte gave a small sigh. She had to tell them the truth.

"I honestly wish I did that. You see, I was ticked off at a lot of people back then and I..." she took a deep breath,"...I abused my powers on them. I used my gift to make other people's life horrible and it came with a price. You want to know why I didn't have my powers until now? Well, here's your answer: they were taken from me. You hear? The same moon that took away my powers and my tail! I admit it! I was selfish, mean, and irresponsible with my powers and as karma would have it, I was lured back into the moon pool that, on the exact same eclipse, took away my... my only connection to my grandmother.

So, there. Now you know."

After telling them her tale, Charlotte felt something being lifted off her shoulders and a HUGE wave of comfort washed over her.

Was that relief?

There was a few minutes of silence until Jonathan spoke up and said:

"\_She'\_s after you because you know how to use your powers for evil. If Laguna is right, you brought this danger onto yourself and are willing to risk others to end it. Charlotte...you are a selfish child who is naive, ignorant, and irresponsible. You are ungrateful and unworthy of your gift, and if I had it my way, I would suggest you take your leave off of this planet before you ruin any other lives."  
\*\*(4)\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><strong><em>To be continued...<em>\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><strong>1) Can you un-scramble the sentence that Lewis said? Winners get to be mentioned in next chapter! <strong>

\*\*2) Sorry if you think Char's outburst was a little out of character, but if you were in her shoes, wouldn't you be a little

angry?\*\*

\*\*3) I know I said that Charlotte wouldn't be getting a love interest, but it wouldn't hurt to give her something to look forward to later on?\*\*

\*\*4)Do you think that Jonathan had a right to yell at her or say those things to her?\*\*

\*\*Don't reply to me with 'good story' or 'I like it' or ect. Tell me how you honestly feel about it.\*\*

\*\*READ & REVIEW!\*\*

## 15. Time to Come Out Part 2

\*\*Hey Guys! Sorry to keep you waiting like before, but now I'm back and get ready! By the way, I would like to send a special shout out to the people who were able to un-scramble Lewis's sentence in the last chapter,\*\*

\*\*1) No one\*\*

\*\*2) No one\*\*

\*\*3) No one\*\*

\*\*Because no one got what Lewis said.\*\*

\*\*Here's the answer:\*\*

\*\*"...the new girl is a mermaid who stepped into a moon pool when she was nine and because she was in an empty moon pool, like you, she has three powers and you just did one of her powers!"\*\*

\*\*PS: Tell me if Charlotte was a little OOC/ Out of character! If she was, that was on purpose!\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><em><strong>Previously...<strong>\_

\_"Until recently, had you ever, ever been a mermaid before?"\_

\_Oh boy. She couldn't lie her way out of this one, but they didn't need to know the entire truth.\_

\_"Yes. When I was 16, I found out something my grandmother, Gracie. Turns out, that along with her friends, she was a mermaid," Charlotte confessed.\_

\_"It makes sense. Your grandmother was a mermaid, so of course Ane'lie's reincarnation would follow in her footsteps. But how were you not a mermaid until now?\_

\_This part made her nervous. Of course it was crucial to know why, but she couldn't tell them about the girls. So, she told it in a simple way.\_

\_ "She gave up her powers during an eclipse that came every 50 years. She was tired of being special, so she gave it up, got married later, had my mom who gave birth to me. So, in a way, I almost missed being a mermaid by a generation. But, at some point, I found and jumped into a moon pool.\_

\_ At first, I was anxious about what my powers were and then I found out that I could manipulate water, freeze it, and had thermal heat powers, along with weather powers."\_

\_ Everyone was shocked, except for Karen's husband, Jonathan. Laguna looked worried, like she was a girl who knew her friend's husband was cheating on her and she was scared to tell that friend the truth.\_

\_ "Alright so we know the what and how in this story, now whats the WHY? WHY didn't you still have you powers when we all met? Did you give them up like your grandmother or something?" he asked, surprising everyone around him. They had no idea he was so into her explanation.\_

\_ The, Charlotte gave a small sigh. She had to tell them the truth.\_

\_ "I honestly wish I did that. You see, I was ticked off at a lot of people then and I..." she took a deep breath,"...I abused my powers on them. I used my gift to make other people's life horrible and it came with a price. You want to know why I didn't have my powers until now? Well, here's your answer: they were taken from me. You hear? The same moon that took away my powers and my tail! I admit it! I was selfish, mean, and irresponsible with my powers and as karma would have it, I was lured back into the moon pool that, on an eclipse, took away my... my only connection to my grandmother.\_

\_ So, there. Now you know."\_

\_ After telling them her tale, Charlotte felt something being lifted off her shoulders and a HUGE wave of comfort washed over her.\_

\_ Was that relief?\_

\_ There was a few minutes of silence until Jonathan spoke up and said:\_

\_ "She's after you because you know how to use your powers for evil. If Laguna is right. you brought this danger onto yourself and are willing to risk others to end it. Charlotte...you are a selfish child who is naÃve, ignorant, and irresponsible. You are ungrateful and unworthy of your gift, and if I had it my way, I would suggest you take your leave off of this planet before you ruin any other lives."\_

\* \* \*

><p><strong><em>Present Time...<em>\*\*

Everyone stared at Jonathan in shock. Sure they knew he could be strict and \_very\_ stubborn, but he had overstepped his boundary when he said that.

"How could you even say that?" Karen asked as she stood up and got over her shock, "you don't even know her or even if what she just said was even the whole story!"

"Where's the need to? I say we have the story right here! Marana found her before \_us\_, saw Charlotte abuse her powers, and intends on having her do it again! Well it's a free country and I'm entitled to say what I like! And I'm saying that we dispose of her and live our lives!" he said as he got up as well.

Karen was shocked.

"How are you! Dispose of her?! She's a human being, not trash. And don't go blaming my hormones and anything else, but I'm not dum. There's more to her story and I intend that we find out what really happened. For all we know, she probably had a reason to go that far!"

"Karen, you know I love you, but you heard the girl. That's why \_she\_ wants her! Charlotte is greedy, uncaring, and she'll definitely join her sister if she wanted to!" he said back.

The "happy couple" started to argue their lungs off afterword. Jonathan continued to say hurtful things about Charlotte, completely ignoring the fact that Charlotte was RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM. Then, Laguna, who's face was red, jumped into the argument...though it looked like she was hiding something in the process. Brendan just covered his ears and ran out the room with out no one noticing.

Charlotte...words could only describe how she felt. Alright, she'll admit, she's done a lot of things that she wasn't proud of and made a lot of mistakes. Plus, she always thought those things about herself over and over in her head.

But hearing Jonathan say that to her...she could handle Rikki's emotional/verbal abuse most of the time, but hearing those words said by him shattered her. It was like she was lifted off a burden to only get a harsher punishment.

As the three adults started to yell louder, Charlotte's moment to speak come too soon.

"How dare you..."she said so menacingly that she got the others attention. Then, she jumped out of her seat and started to yell.

"I CAME HERE FOR HELP AND TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THE HELL WAS GOING ON WITH MY LIFE AND THIS IS HOW I'M TREATED! BELIEVE IT OR NOT, \_JONATHAN, "\_ said the words with malice," YOU REALLY MUST BE DENSE TO THINK I ASKED FOR THIS! I DIDN'T ASK TO HAVE SOME EVIL MERPERSON WATCHING ME AND CONTROLLING ME WITH ONE WORD NOR LISTEN TO A BUNCH OF PEOPLE I BARELY KNOW OR NEED HELP FROM!"

She felt tears running down her face like a raging waterfall. Any small makeup that she wore was got smudged and started to run down her face. Her eyes were getting red and were filled with regret, guilt, and hurt. The three adults saw this and started to feel guilty themselves, except for Jonathan.

But despite the tears running down her face, she managed to calm down

a little.

"Now, since I'm not wanted here and be judged by people who won't even give me a chance, much less a choice to have the last word, I think I'll show myself out the door."

With whatever pride and dignity she had left, she ran out the office and ran to the beach, leaving an awestruck expression on the others faces.

\* \* \*

><p><em><strong>With the Cove's...<strong>\_

After a few minutes, the shock wore off on the three adults. No one had ever raised their voice to either of them like that, even Laguna, and that was saying something.

Karen was the first to break the ice. She turned to Jonathan.

"See what you've done? You just HAD to upset her like that! Don't you think you might have taken that a bit- no, OVERLY, too far!?" she asked.

Then, Jonathan turned to her.

"Karen, we can't trust her. She's bad news. She attracted Mar- \_her \_herself and there's nothing that we can do about it except get rid of her," he defended himself.

"But is it worth saying that she should take her own life? I'm sorry if this hurts, but your acting like a damn fool! You don't even \_know\_ her and your making stupid suggestions!"

Then, Laguna jumped in.

"Jonathan, she's right. Since I've been on land, I've learned one thing about land dwellers. And that's this: they don't admit their mistakes so easily. And if they did, only a few have real guilt about it. And Charlotte is one of those few people who do. Trust me, I saw the look in her eyes. I'll admit, something like this would not be permitted in a mermaid council, but at least they let other mermaids get one more chance to redeem themselves."

"But this isn't a mermaid council, Laguna. This is about one person, a teenage girl to be exact, who has the power to end all civilization as we know it. We don't have time to go through the path of trusting her and stuff like that," he said, "for you, all you see is the mermaid that sacrificed herself for every person she endangered. But to me, all I see is a reckless girl who can't handle having power and the death of us all. We can't risk that, I can't risk that."

With that, he started to walk away from them..

But both women knew what he planned to do..

"Jonathan, you are not to harm a hair on Charlotte!" Laguna said angrily, pointing at him.

"I agree with Mother on this one! Don't you dare put your hands on

her!" Karen said too, her mother instincts and pregnancy hormones kicking in.

Then, he turned to them one more time.

"Oh really? Well give me one good reason, one, that will convince me otherwise!"

Laguna was fuming. She couldn't handle the thought of him killing her friend.

"EASY! THE DAY SHE HAD THE VISION, I SAW ALL OF HER MEMORIES! EVERY LAST ONE!"

Realizing what she just said, Laguna quickly clasped her hand over her mouth.

Jonathan and Karen looked at her in shock and Jonathan no longer had the urge to kill Charlotte.

They now realized that there was more to the situation than they thought.

By accident, Laguna traded her gift of visions for Charlotte's memories and still has them.

And now Charlotte had the burden of possibly seeing the future.

\* \* \*

><p><em><strong>With Charlotte's POV...<strong>\_

I ran out the caf   and down the beach as fast as I could. By the time I was sure I was out of sight, I collapsed onto the warm, soft sand and let out a long-awaited wail that I held in for so long.

Was karma still against me, even after a year of depression? I'll admit, since Australia, the rest of my Junior year as a normal girl was like bad luck hitting her in the face repeatedly in every direction! But this was sort of my second year, the year I turn 18 for Pete's sake, and I felt like karma was still against me!

I was seriously starting to doubt Lewis's belief that Fate's decision to let me redeem myself was really false hope and only said to me out of self pity. I didn't deserve anything that's happened to me. All I wanted to do was finally live my life my way and the right way. After all, I took in a stray dog that saved my life, joined a tough sports team and liked it, joined the school choir and now likes to write my own songs.

Why is karma so against me after I've done all those good things?

As I continued to wail and sob, I curled myself into a ball and hid my head into my chest.

For every time I cried...I just wanted to die.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>3rd POV<strong>

"Charlotte? Is that you?" a voice called from behind her.

She lifted her head and shifted her body a little and, to her surprise, turned and saw Riley looking at her in deep concern.

\_All great,\_ she thought, \_he's seen me cry.\_

Riley saw her tears, ran up and held her tightly in his arms. Then, he started to rock her back and forth very gently. Charlotte's mind didn't even care about that because she was still crying and wailing to notice.

"Shhhh, it's okay. Just let it out," Riley calmly whispered into her ear. His perfect, gentlemanly voice sounded like a soothing lullaby.

Charlotte kept crying for a few minutes until her wails and sobs turned into whimper and sniffles. Riley smiled. She seemed to calm down. Then, she looked up at him. Then, after a few minutes, she instantly got out of his grasp, got up, and started to walk away.

"Hey! Wait up!" Riley called as he ran up behind her. But she didn't say anything. Why was she walking away from him after he just comforted her?

So, as a better approach, he ran in front of her. She stopped walking, but she looked away.

\_Well she's prideful,\_ he thought.

"Riley Byrnes."

She looked at him in confusion.

"What?"

Riley took a breath and said "My name is Riley Byrnes. I work at Paradise Cove as a lifeguard at the beach and the closest mother figure I have is Laguna Cove."

He had no idea and didn't really intend on saying that, but that was as close to a proper introduction that he could get.

Charlotte stared at him. Her face and eyes were still red from crying and her brownish-red hair was slightly messy. He liked it.

"Listen, I know what happened back there between us was slightly...awkward, but I think we should formally introduce ourselves to one another. I told you about me. Now it's your turn."

Charlotte just stared at him. But if he looked closely into her eyes, it would seem as if she was debating with herself on whether she should speak or not.

Then, she talked to him.

"Charlotte Watsford."

This time, he was the confused one.

"Huh?"

She rolled her eyes. "My name is Charlotte Watsford. I'm 17 1/2 years old, unemployed, in my Senior year of high school, and my mom is a chief and works at a small, but well-known restaurant in L.A."

For a moment, she smiled at him, but then hid it. Riley smiled back at her. At least he knew something about her.

"So, since we can now say that we know each other, do you... want to hang out with me for the rest of the day? I mean, my shift was up anyways, so maybe we could do something," Riley said, "I know what your thinking. I only just want to get to know you better."

He waited a few minutes for her answer, but then smiled when he got her reply.

"Ok."

\* \* \*

><p><em><strong>At Sunset...<strong>\_

Charlotte was staring out at the edge of the pier...the same edge that she jumped from a month ago.

She, to her own surprise, had a really great day with Riley. While avoiding any water-related activities, they played volleyball, which she was really good at, rode on a dirt bike that he rented, which she really liked, and, to sum it up, enjoyed each other's company.

But, as they say, all good things must come to an end. His dad called him and he had to leave. So, she stayed at the beach until her bus came to get her.

Through the purplish-orange sky, she saw the moon starting to rise over the horizon. It was a full moon.

Charlotte considered going back into the cafÃ© to avoid getting moon-struck, something she really really didn't want to go through again, but she didn't want to face Laguna's family. Mainly Jonathan.

As she continued to stare off into the horizon, she heard footsteps behind her. She turned around and saw Laguna walking towards her. Her hair was down and she was wearing a blue nightgown and her feet were bare.

"I thought I'd find you here," she said.

But Charlotte ignored her and continued looking at the moon. She let Laguna walk until she was right next to her.

"It's a full moon out tonight. To land dwellers, it could be the most beautiful thing. But to some merpeople, it can be the most dangerous. It's like mind control over the soul. It can guide other mermaids to their destinies. Though some believe that the moon is deadly, it's



simply just doing its job. Whether its guiding mermaids to lay eggs or simply increasing their powers, it's its job," she continued, "Charlotte, because your... a special case, you won't get affected by the moon like you were before and can resist easily."

Charlotte looked at the elder. "What do you mean by that? And besides, I'm not wanted here. Your son-in-law said that loud in clear."

"Ah, but Riley seems to think otherwise," Laguna countered back.

Oh crud, she saw them together. Even after she warned her about him. But Charlotte had a fading habit of not caring all the time.

"He was just being nice to me. That's all. Besides, what do I have that he likes?" she asked.

"That's something you need to find out for yourself," Laguna said, "and the reason I said that you're a special case is because, for a while now, you were, and still are, the holder of a special gift. Something that I now no longer have. And it makes you more invulnerable to get moon-struck."

Now Charlotte was worried. "Laguna, is there something you want to tell me?"

Now, Laguna looked more sheepish than worried.

"Charlotte, do you remember what happened the day we first met?"

She nodded. "Yeah, I received a vision about me being a mermaid."

"Well, in order for you to receive that vision, there was a transfer."

Charlotte had a feeling that she was not going to like what was coming up next.

"\_Laguna,\_ what happened to give me a vision?"

Now she was going to hear the truth.

"Charlotte, I don't know how, but somehow...you got my gift to see visions. So, at first, \_she\_ should have been able to use words to tempt you into joining her, but instead \_she\_ showed you \_her\_ visions, more like illusions if you ask me, to tempt you into joining her. And by now, it would've worked."

There was a few moments of silence. Laguna was really worried on how Charlotte would react. After her confession to Jonathan and Karen, he had the nerve to demand what she saw about Charlotte, but there was no way she was telling him anything.

Then, Charlotte let out a funny choke and started laughing really hard. Laguna looked at her like she was crazy.

"What are you laughing at? This is not a laughing matter! This is serious!" Laguna exclaimed.

But Charlotte started to hold her stomach as she laughed harder and had tears falling from her eyes. After a few minutes, she needed air and stopped laughing. Her breathing was heavy, but she was still holding her stomach.

As she wiped her tears, she said "I'm sorry, but part of me had to let that out. You see, if I really somehow got your gift to see visions, it explains so much. There was absolutely no way I could have seen myself, \_centuries\_\_ ago, \_with only just words\_. I had to ACTUALLY \_see\_ it! And it would explain that dream Marana sent me a month ago. It was right before I became a mermaid.

It was at a beach, in Australia. There were 3 girls and their boyfriends were there. They were waiting for someone. Then, I come in," then she sighed, "we were all friends. Then, right before we dove into the water, we waved back to the boys and one of them looked at me, like I was special or something. Then, after we dove into the water, we..."

She didn't want to say more, but Laguna had a good idea on who those people were.

"Cleo, Rikki, and Emma. The other mermaids you met, I presume?" Laguna asked, shocking Charlotte to death.

"Wh...wh...what?"

Laguna sighed. "That's what I've tried to tell you, Charlotte. Somehow, when you got my gift, to do that, you traded your memories for it. Charlotte, I literally know everything about you and some of them you're not proud of."

Charlotte was so shocked that she put her head down in shame. Laguna knew.

"Well," she said, trying to lift the tension, "since you know everything, how much do you know?"

Laguna shrugged her shoulders. "Well, for starters, you weren't born completely healthy. You had a high risk for heart failure and your lungs were almost clogged up. The doctors fixed you up, but if you were, I don't know, 10-30 feet or so up in the air, you would pass out and your heart would most likely stop."

\_Great, she knows my medical history,\_ Charlotte thought.

"When you were 4, you discovered your love for art and dancing. But when you were 6 and your grandmother died, your mother couldn't fully afford the funeral and dance lessons, you dropped your love for dancing, but kept your love for art. Then, when you were 7, you won an award for a piece of artwork you had spent a week on, but your mom wasn't there. But you brushed it off so you didn't look disappointed. And after that, you constantly dealt with bullying and unwanted fights.

But the moment you lived in Queensland, Australia, everything changed for you. You were no longer teased, had a boyfriend, amazing powers that came with being a mermaid, but all you needed left was friends. I know what happened down there, Charlotte, and I know you're still in recovery from it."

Charlotte froze. Laguna definitely knew. Having the gift of visions is one thing, but unknowingly trading for that with your own memories was a complete nightmare.

"And to be honest," Laguna said, "I didn't judge you, unlike my selfish son-in-law."

Charlotte did a double-take and looked at her in shock.

Laguna used this as a reason to explain.

"Believe me, I didn't trust you the moment when I saw what you did. But that night, after Karen convinced me to let you have your space, I went through your memories again and I saw something that no one else saw."

"And what's that? I should have my memories erased as well?" Charlotte guessed sarcastically.

Laguna just shook her head and continued.

"Not even close, and besides, mermaids can't do that. Anyways, it was that despite how others see it, your actions didn't go unjustified. And to be honest, as bad as you acted, you didn't deserve to lose your tail."

Now Charlotte was looking at her like she grew two heads.

"Say what now?!"

"If my theory is correct and you did unintentionally draw \_her \_to you, I can see why they took your powers away. But in a pod of mermaid, there's a mermaid council. They're there to make sure that things like that didn't go unpunished but still kept the peace, but unless you broke an ancient law, you would have still kept your tail," Laguna said.

"So, your saying that if they knew another way, I could have kept my tail, just not my powers?" Charlotte asked skeptically.

"In a pod, abusing your powers wasn't uncommon. In fact, that happened all the time in pods. Mermaids usually don't know how to handle that much power at first, so they can easily abuse them. That's why there were mermaid councils: to stop those kind of situations from getting out of hand. The usual punishment for the abuse was usually taking away their powers temporarily, an entirely different process, and shunning them from the group. In a way, if I may use this as an example, would've still been a mermaid in a pod, but you would've been alienated from any activities and have your powers stripped only until the council saw fit that you'd deserve them again.

Though I'll side with those girls that you didn't use your powers well, I'm completely on \_your \_side that you had yet to prove yourself and that you would've kept your tail," Laguna explained.

That was a lot for Charlotte to take in. Despite how badly she acted, someone still had faith in her. And, to her, that felt pretty great

and a huge honor as it was a huge responsibility.

'Well, even if I kept my tail, the girls would have HATED to see me in the water," Charlotte said, trying to ease the unnoticed tension.

"They're not a mermaid council and despite being ones for a year, they don't know the rules that goes with being a true mermaid, and in my book, dating a land dweller and letting them know the secret is absolutely UNFORGIVABLE in my book!" Laguna exclaimed before calming down, " but I want you to know that you're not alone and you have people who are on your side. \_Plus, \_I really think that you should start training. Mar...Mara... \_Marana\_ will still try to posses you, mentally and physically."

Then, before Charlotte could stop her, Laguna looked at the moon. So, Charlotte kept her eyes focused on her instead of the moon.

But, to her surprise, she didn't look awestruck like the girls had looked.

"Don't worry, aside from the gift, I spent years learning to keep my self-control during full moons. Before I go, I need to tell you something: First, don't look at the moon now.

Secondly, stop thinking of yourself as a horrible person. Just because you did some of the wrong things doesn't mean that your horrible now. During my time on land, I learned that a person can either have a good side or a bad side. You are one of those people who have both of those, but your learning how to handle it. So stop being letting those girls make you so insecure and assume your role as the hero."

With that, she turned her head and started to head towards the caf  .

Charlotte watched her leave and thought about what she said.

Laguna truly believed that she was as different person than what she saw.

Was she insecure after the mermaid ordeal?

Truth be told...

Yes.

Did she see herself as the villain that deserved hard life?

Yes.

Until now.

After she left Australia, she moved to a city called Atlanta in the States. At first, she was okay, but then she started to get bullied by other girls on everything about her, from her height, to her weight, to her hair, to her clothes and to everything about her! Then, it got worse when she started to suffer from physical abuse...aka they had beaten her up.

And the messed up part: Charlotte saw them as the good guys and herself as the bad guy. So she let them hurt her.

In her mom's point of view, it took the promotion from her boss and a visit to her daughter's school, and accidentally seeing Charlotte's beatings in action, to have her instantly agree to move to California for her job.

But, in a way, as much as others would hate her for thinking this, she kind of \_liked \_being the bad guy.

If she wasn't, like many other heroes of today, the villain gave the hero a purpose. If there weren't any villains, then the protagonist would be pushed around and have no self-confidence.

Hey, maybe she \_did \_do something nice for Cleo after all. \*\*( I'll leave you guys, the readers of this story, to find out what she meant!)\*\*

But, the more that she thought about it, no one likes being the villain. They're supposed to have no heart or a care for the world. But she had the opposite: she had a heart and cared for the world.

Then, as if she was looking for an answer to her problems, she looked up at the moon.

At the moment, she didn't feel moon-struck like she did before nor did she feel a magical surge of power flowing through her. Instead, she felt a pull on her conscience.

\_Come...\_

She knew that voice anywhere.

Marana.

The moment Charlotte heard the \_voice,\_ her mind and her body received a strong, tingling reaction, like it was forcing her to obey the command. But instead of following it, she had a different reaction. She looked up at the moon one more time, then she looked deep into the sparkling water of the sea.

"\*\*\_NO!\_ \*\*Listen and listen good! I don't know who or what you are, though I have a \_really \_good idea, but I'm NOT going to be your little puppet or anything else! If you really want me, then your going to have to come and get me...\_personally,\_ because I refuse to listen and play along in your little mind games!

Keep your visions, keep your own 'gifts', and keep EVERYTHING! Cause I don't want it or NEED IT! So... LEAVE ME ALONE!" Charlotte shouted at the water and heard her voice echo out into the open. Then, she looked at the moon.

She felt the tingling slowly fading from her as she turned around and started walking off the pier and towards the cafÃ©. Though she knew there was going to be more yelling and shouting involved, with just a few terms and negotiations, she'll agree to begin her training as a powerful mermaid by a imortally-vowed mermaid named Laguna

Mermaidian.

\* \* \*

><p><em><strong>Somewhere in a dark cave under the sea...<strong>\_

A voice heard a declaration that, though it didn't frighten her, it left her sightly disturbed.

"\_So, my dear sister has finally developed ,what those hideous land dwellers call, 'spirit' in her. And I see that Laguna has finally found out that I knew about my dear sister's existence, but no one can learn more of my plan. Perhaps I should send a dear friend of mine to look out for my sister."\_

The \_voice\_ turned to a tiny snake that was resting on the cave floor.

\_"Wake up my little pet. It's time you paid my sister a little...visit. This is something rather...interesting to watch."\_

\_"Though I pity her. Does she truly believe that she nat afraid of me?"\_

The cave shook as the \_voice \_gave out a terrifying laugh as the tiny snake started to grow increasingly as it headed out the cave.

\* \* \*

><p>Charlotte truly doesn't know the amount of danger that is coming for her.<p>

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Now THAT was a long chapter! Chapter 15 and over 5,000 words! I barely go over 4,000 words! And for those who might need clarification, Laguna knew what happened to Charlotte the whole time and Jonathan doesn't know the true reason on why she abused her powers!<strong>

\*\*In case you saw the bolded words in the parenthesis, feel free to tell me what you thought. NO BASHING CHARLOTTE!\*\*

\*\*Don't reply to me with 'good story' or 'I like it' or ect. Tell me how you honestly feel about it.\*\*

\*\*Read & Review\*\*

## 16. Rumours

\*\*Hey guys! I'm back! I am SO SO SO SOOOOOOOO SORRY FOR THE LATE UPDATE. BELIEVE ME, I'VE BEEN BUSY. I was traveling in Puerto Rico and let me tell you, it was B-e-a-utiful! \*\*

\*\*Ok, this chapter was supposed to be called "Rumours and First Day on the Job" but this is going to be two parts, so I'm simply going to call it "Rumours".\*\*

**\*\*This is Chapter 15 and I hope you like it!\*\***

**\*\*P.S. Just to let you all know: this story is NOT ON HIATUS!\*\***

\* \* \*

><p><em><strong>At Charlotte's house...<strong>\_

**\*\*(Guitar starts to play)\*\***

\_Wake up in the morning\_

\_All think about is you\_

\_It's true\_

\_I look into my mirror \_

\_And all I see is you \_\_\_and I wonder \_

\_Why I feel this way\_

\_When nothing feels so right like the day that you are mine\_

\_And I can't fight this feeling anymore\_

\_I say hey\_

\_I won't walk away\_

\_I will always fight to save our day\_

\_I say hey\_

\_I can't walk away \_

\_I just hope that you come back some day\_

\_Baby I won't walk away...\_

**\*\*(Guitar stops playing)\*\***

"Alright, how was that?" Charlotte asked through the phone as she put her guitar to the side. After that night at Paradise, she had felt very...inspired. So, with her mom's permission, she was driven home by Karen and the moment she stepped through the door, she grabbed her notebook and started writing.

"\*\*\_Well... I don't know? Why don't you let me record you and send it to a record producer because your FAN-FREAKIN-TASTIC\_\*\*!" Alaine exclaimed from the other side of the phone. Charlotte chuckled.

To say, it's surprised a lot of people that she and Alaine had become friends, was an understatement.

Those two other girls that Charlotte had seen around Alaine on her first day, whose names she had learned were Willow and Tessa, dumped her out of the blue like she was yesterday's trash and quickly found a new friend to replace her. Charlotte, being an innocent witness to the entire thing, was all too familiar with the pain of being

rejected and replaced.\*\* (1) \*\*

So when Alaine had nowhere to sit at lunch that day, she was very surprised when Charlotte offered her a seat at her table. After a brief talk and, without spilling the secret, Charlotte told her a different version on what had happened between her and the girls and despite it all, how she accepted it.

And she, Charlotte Watsford, is still shell-shocked on Alaine's response.

\_"They were idiots," Alaine had said casually, but caused Charlotte to choke on her drink.\_

\_After swallowing, Charlotte asked "What?"\_

\_Alaine collected her thought for a moment and said "Well, it seems to me that the only reason that they didn't accept you was because of two reasons: 1. You were dating one of the girls' exes. So, to me, I'm sensing a little Edward-Bella-Jacob thing going on. 2. All you did was just got something that practically tied you to your grandmother.\_

\_So, as far as I see it, they think that you're the selfish one but they had the nerve to treat you as if you're some wannabe and they're the perfect princesses or something."\_

\_Charlotte shook her head. "I know that one of them is \*\*extremely\*\* hot-tempered. She'll probably burn you alive for that princess comment."\_

\_Alaine just shrugged her shoulders, mumbling "I call them as I see them," and continued onto a different subject. But something was on Charlotte's mind.\_

\_"Alaine?"\_

\_"Hmm?"\_

\_"Did you seriously just compare my love life to Twilight?"\_

\*\* (2) \*\*

Safe to say, though she's still not over the Twilight comment, with their schedules mixed with choir and softball practice, it wasn't long until the two outcast girls were joint to the hip. For example:

By choir, Alaine felt that Char-Char, her new nickname for Charlotte and one that probably wouldn't last, had potential to make it in the show-business while Charlotte said that she could practically see Alaine on Broadway.

In softball, Charlotte had told Alaine that she would make a great coach on a major league softball team, much due to her helping Char everyday with her pitches and throws. Alaine said to her that though she might lack a little edge to the sport, she could see her doing track.

So, to put it simple, the two have grown close and could easily rely on each other. The only problem was trust and the problem in that was



Alaine's mom. But she had to put that aside for another day.

"Oh come on, \_Al\_," she heard Alaine growl at her new nickname through the phone, "if I didn't know any better, I saw you sing at the church you invited me and my mom to last week. And I must say, compared to you, I would lose my voice if I tried the high notes that you oh- so-well mastered effortlessly."

She could practically feel Alaine smirk at her comment.

"\*\*\_Don't go jell-o on my beautiful voice! I'm not the one who met some beach hottie and won't even tell her home-girl his \_name\_!\*\*" Alaine said dramatically.

Ouch! A playful yet direct hit at once.

"All right! I won't tell you his last name, but his first name is Riley," Charlotte said with a dopey look forming on her face slightly. But before she could enter Lala land, Alaine spoke.

"\*\*\_Riley? That's it? I expected to hear more of a Eric or Brandon or something, but I think I know a Riley! Anyways you told me you had some big news?\_\*\*\_"

\_"Yeah, you see, the day I met Riley, I-" suddenly there was a screech on Alaine said in the background.

"\*\*\_ALAINE MEREDITH WILLIAMS! WHO THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING TO ON THE PHONE? IT BETTER NOT BE THAT CHARLOTTE GIRL OR\_ I'LL\*\*" Alaine's mom screamed. Alaine quickly said that they talk at school and hung up the phone.

Yep, Charlotte was sure that Alaine's mom had unresolved issues.

After doing her morning routine, she decided to put on a white blouse with no sleeves, a black skater skirt with a belt, blue sneakers and added a coral flower necklace and shades for accessories. For some reason, she felt like dressing cute.

\* \* \*

><p><em><strong>At Valencia High...<strong>\_

As Charlotte got off the bus, she spotted Alaine waving at her from the distance. Her hair was in a one sided messy pigtail, but what she was wearing was a different story.

She had on a long sleeve shirt and her jeans were tight-fitting. Why would she wear long sleeves when it was 60 degrees?

Wait a minute?

Long sleeves...60 degrees weather...?

Alright, she had to push \_that \_conclusion aside for now. When she got closer to Alaine, they both hugged each other and headed into the school.

"So tell me, what were you trying to tell me earlier?" Alaine asked. Though Charlotte partially wanted to ask her what went down between her and her mom, she decided against it and told her, in her own version, about how she got her "job" at Paradise.

By end of her story, the two were in the school hallway and Alaine started to laugh her head off.

"Well, if I didn't know any better, I'd say that the only reason you even that job was because of a certain life guard named...\_Riley,"\_ she teased, putting the emphasis on his name.

It was, to be honest, to whole days since Charlotte agreed to undergo mermaid training with Laguna, and to be honest again, she wasn't too thrilled about it.

According to the agreement between Charlotte and the immortal mermaid, everyday after school, someone, most likely Phil, would take her to Paradise, where she would start working there as a waitress for the caf  . By the end of her shift, which was either before or after 7pm, she would be taken to the Cove Residence, where she would start her training.

It was going to be difficult with softball practice and choir rehearsal, but now her schedule was now officially closed. The only days off she had were her weekends, and those were the days she spent doing mermaid training 24/7.

"Alaine, are you serious? Riley's kind of cute, but I barely know him. Sure I'll be working close to him, but we're not dating," Charlotte explained.

But the African-American rolled her eyes and said "S\_ure\_...", meaning she'll believe it when she sees it, "but do you know what school he goes to at least?"

Charlotte shook he head. "To be honest, no. And besides, the last time I talked to someone I barely knew anything about him, I was nearly sexually assaulted and was running for my life! The only good thing I got out of that was when I got Thomas and took him in."

Alaine gasped. "Say what now?!" Her face definitely expressed how shocked she was.

Charlotte cringed and mentally slapped herself upside the head. She forgot that no one knew what had \_really\_ happened that day. Not even her mom. All she told her was that she hitched a ride and went to the mall, and improvised that Thomas followed her home.

And now Alaine was going to give her hell when they got to lunch period.

"Should I be worried that Thomas didn't come with you today?" Alaine asked hesitantly, her eyes looking at Charlotte worriedly.

"Actually, you have nothing to worry about. This morning, he found out that he was going to the vet to get the shots that he needed. But from what I can tell you, he wasn't having it."

Then Charlotte started to laugh. "You should have been there. No matter how much me and my mom pulled and tugged on his leash, he sat on the ground, refusing to even move into the car. Then our neighbors came and practically threw him into the car and shut the door quickly," suddenly both girls were laughing as she continued to finish, "by the time I got on the bus, Thomas looked at me like he was given the death sentence."

By the time the girls had stopped laughing, everyone was looking at them, but they ignored it.

"Alright girl, I gotta head to my locker before I have to make up some excuse on why I'm late for class. I'll see you at lunch and we \*\*\_will \_\*\*talk about\_ Riley,\_" Elaine said in a teasing tone as she trotted off. Charlotte was tempted to chase her, but decided against it.

As she turned around to head to her locker, as Fate would have it, she bumped into some hooded guy and the books she was carrying went flying all over the floor.

"Sorry," Hooded Guy muttered as he bent down to help her pick up her stuff.

"It's okay. I just had rotten luck...and I wasn't looking. Are you okay...Riley?!" Charlotte said in surprise as she looked up to see it was Riley indeed.

He had on a faded long-sleeve hoodie that looked like he was trying to hide his face and dark jeans. The combination was not something anyone would wear in this sunny weather.

"Riley, you go here?" she asked as she gathered her books and the two got up. She got a better look at him and saw that he had a black eye. "Ry, what happened to your face?"

She reached out her hand to look at it, but he leaned away. So she brought her hand down and changed the topic.

"I mean, you work as a life guard in Paradise, but I didn't know you lived so far away," she said, trying to avoid looking at his eye. He smiled.

"Yeah, I work there during the week, but to get there on time, I have to leave early," he said, "but I can't believe that you go here too! I mean, you do know that almost half the celebrities that we know went here before they were famous right?"

"I knew. I did a little research before I enrolled. And for our amusement, can you name a few who went here?" she asked.

"Yeah. A guy named Taylor Laughtner and some blond named Ashley Tissings or something," he said.

She chuckled and corrected him. "Nope. It's Taylor Lautner and Ashley Tisdale. I swear, you would know Taylor because he plays Jacob in Twilight and Ashley from that old show about the twin living in a hotel."

Riley laughed. "Wow, your a Twilight fan? Who knew you were a sucker for crappy love stories. HAH! I bet your on Team Jacob!"

Now, he was just making fun of her. And if she wasn't trying to be a newly changed girl, one would only hope to pull her from him when she was through with him.

So, taking a deep breather, she said " So, just because I spent half a year around arrogant snobs who constantly fight over two guys who wear too much make up and don't even exist, it means I'm into that stuff?!"

Riley stopped laughing and looked at her to see that she was serious.

"Charlotte, I-"

RRRRRRRRRIIIIIIIIIINNNNNNNNNNGGGGG!

"Listen, this **\_\*\*sucker\*\*\_** has to get her stuff and head to class. I'll probably see you in Paradise," she said as she turned her heel and walked away from him.

For a second, she heard him say to himself "Great, you try to talk to the girl and you end up making a fool out of yourself. I'm an idiot."

\_Yeah, you are, \_she thought.

\* \* \*

><p><em><strong>At lunch...<strong>\_

Charlotte would've been lying if she said that she wasn't happy to see Alaine.

Honestly, until today **\*\*(it's Monday in this chapter) \*\***she had not only discovered that Riley went to her school, but he was pretty much in all her classes. She didn't want to think about it, but she was pretty sure that he was stalking her.

By lunch time, she quickly got her food, sat down with Alaine at their usual table and explained what had happened.

"Are you serious!? Riley Byrnes!? I should have known! Paradise Cove, Riley The Heir living out of the district..."

"Wait? Why did you just call him an "heir"?" Charlotte asked, "is he royalty or something?"

Alaine looked alert. Her eyes widened and looked around to see if anyone was watching them until she leaned in close to Charlotte.

"Trust, this might be my second year here, but let me tell you this: Gossip is as fast as texting."

Charlotte rolled her eyes at the comparison and continued to listen.

"You ask me if Riley's royalty, and honey, he is. He's the type of royalty you DON'T want to get mixed up in. You see, Riley's dad was into some serious dark stuff over the years, if you know what I mean. He's been in jail so many times that the list is as long as my two arms.

At first, it was just small stuff like graphetti, robbing drug stores and things like that. But then it seemed that he started joining gangs and," Alaine gulped, "raping and killing people. To be honest no one knows why he's still out of prison. Some say it was because he was buddies with the wardens but others say... it was because of Riley."

Charlotte did a double take. "Are you serious?"

Alaine nodded. "It's gossip. It might be true, it might not be true. All I know is that people like to hear drama. Anyways, the word is that Riley was born from this rival gang member's girlfriend, possibly the leader's girl, and after Riley's dad had gotten drunk one night, he got completely wasted, saw Riley's mom, nobody knew her name, and badda bing badda boom, Riley was unwillingly conceived.

Turns out she was the leader's girl and he had feelings for her. And when she told him about the kid, he thought Riley was his and was happy about it. But unfortunately, he had to find out from an old friend on who Riley's real dad is and went ballistic. He started abusing Riley's mom and stressing her out in the process. Since she wanted to keep her baby, the leader wanted her to miscarry."

"So his mom wasn't safe?" Charlotte asked.

"For a while, but it ended when Riley's dad and his gang sieged the rival's place. His mom had a very visible 4-month baby bump, scared to death, and was bruised up from the abuse when Riley's dad personally found her hiding in a closet. Long story short: After telling him her story and pleading for protection, in less than a week later, she became a bride.

Though she didn't want the marriage, she was glad her son got to live at all and soon enough, she tried to reclaim her life, like studying to get her GED and stuff. And over time, Riley's dad developed feelings for her. But, like some stories, something tragic happened. When Riley was six, he was helping his mom make dinner when his dad came into the kitchen. Riley was told to leave, so he did, but instead of leaving completely, he entered a see-through closet as quietly as he could to listen in. Anyways, he dad finally told his mom about his true feelings about her. And, though I would've reacted the same way, she was shocked. After being forced to marry him for six years, he actually liked her back. But like I said, all she wanted was for her son to live and be taken care of. She told the old man as well as other reasons to turn him down. I heard the dialogue part and thought he would've taken it well.

Key word: **\_\*\*Th\*\*\_\_\*\*ought.\*\*\_**

But he didn't. You see, he..." Alaine trailed as she started to squirm in fright, "to say in kid version: He slaughtered her. It was completely unexpected. At first he looked calm, then out of nowhere, he grabs her by the neck, pushes her against the wall and starts to

punch her repeatedly in the face. Then he lets her go and watches as she slides down wall. Then, he starts to kick her from the head to the stomach and her face was NOT easy to look at. Then, he pulls her up from the ground and grabs a knife. She made direct eye contact through the closet and looked into Riley's eyes. He looked at her with teary-filled eyes as she mouthed "\*\*\*\_I love you so\_ \_much\_\*\*," to him as his dad stabbed her in the chest repeatedly."

Charlotte looked terrified as her friend continued.

"By the time it was over, the police had busted through the door and his dad was arrested. Another officer found Riley a few minutes later. It wasn't an easy thing for the cops to deal with, but could you blame them? A six-year-old saw his mother's murder and probably needed intense therapy to get over it. After the trial was over, it amazed everyone that the man ended up raising him. People figured he tried to fix his act and all, but gave up and became a drunk. The reason Riley is called 'The Heir' was because he probably has the potential to do things that surpassed his dad. But he formed a tough shell around himself and became as hard as a rock. He knows martial arts and hand-in-hand combat, so he's a bad ass. Completely works out, so he's fit. And he's known as a smart mouth...so he's a jerk."

\_And that doesn't sound like the Riley I met, \_Charlotte thought, \_until now.\_

"So, around here, he keeps to himself a lot. But I'm warning you, stay away from Riley. He's bad news," Alaine concluded. She almost looked relieved to finish her tall tale. Guess it's better hearing a story instead of saying it with your own mouth.

Like she was coming out of a trance, which was happening a lot lately, she regained her posture and shook her head.

\_What am I even thinking, \_she thought, \_it's just a silly rumour\_.

"I don't know, Alaine. When I met him, he seemed like a gentleman. Maybe his dad is the one with the bad rep and he's overshadowed by it," Charlotte suggested.

Alaine looked at her and shrugged. "Your right. Maybe it's just a rumour, but you never know. So just heed my warning, o.k?"

Charlotte nodded and started into another topic.

"Hey, what songs do you think Miss Analies will have us do for the showcase?" She asked.

Alaine's eyes sparkled with enthusiasm.

"Well, I was thinking she might do something like classical music, but people today are such a critic..." Alaine said.

After that, Charlotte stopped listening. As much as she really did want to hear her friends suggestions, along with her mind, her eyes wondered over to a table far away from the rest of the cafeteria and saw a hooded figure eating lunch. And for a second, she could have \*\*\_sworn \_\*\*he looked directly at her! Charlotte has a feeling in her

gut that, like her misadventure in Australia, she had yet to uncover the mystery of Riley Byrnes.

"HEY!"

Charlotte jolted and looked at Alaine, who looked slightly pissed.

"How dare you distract me like that! In case you forgot, I told you that you had to tell me about your little 'assault' at the mall you told me about earlier," Alaine said with a 'Don't-you-dare-lie-to-me' look on her face.

Charlotte mentally whacked herself upside the head.

This could take a while.

\* \* \*

><p><em>To Be Continued...<em>

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Okay! So far, we have gotten a little info on Charlotte's mystery guy. Is he all he says he is or does he live up to the rumour?<strong>

\*\*\*\*1)Alaine is a character I created to show that, in a way, Charlotte's not the only one to do bad things and get cast aside. Though some of you know most of her actions were do to her mother and all, I believe even people who live ordinary lives can make mistakes.\*\*\*\*

\*\*2) Review if you caught my Twilight References in this chapter. Lately, I've been read Twilight Fan fiction and while I love the series, I can now see why people dislike the movies and the book and to be honest, I feel sorry for Edward and Jacob.\*\*

\*\*Jake could have found any girl. Heck, I think he could have set aside his anger towards Leah and got together with her, in my opinion, and Eddie could have found a mate in someone else. To me, for both guys to fall for a girl who was responsible for so many deaths and torn apart families, I can see why Bella's so disliked.\*\*

\*\*And what do you think of the characters so far, like Alaine, Laguna and her family, and most of all... Charlotte!\*\*

\*\*Don't reply to me with 'good story' or 'I like it' or ect. Tell me how you honestly feel about it.\*\*

\*\*READ AND REVIEW!\*\*

\*\*P.S. The song at the begining is called I Won't Walk Away from Kate Alexa.\*\*

## 17. And First Day on the Job!

\*\*Hey guys! This is chapter 16 and my continuation of "Rumors and the

First Day on the Job" chapter!\*\*

\*\*Alright, as so you all know, for my first story, I'm nearly at 100 reviews, have 14 followers and 8 favorites! Not bad but I need YOU GUYS, THE READERS, to spread the word about my story to as many people as you can so I can get 100 reviews!\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><strong>After school, 5:15 pm, Paradise Cove Cafe...<strong>

WOOF! WOOF!

"Alright, alright, you mangy mutt, I get it!" Phil said as he parked the bus into the Paradise Cafe parking lot and opened the door. Thomas barked at him before running off the bus with Charlotte following close behind him.

After a rather long day, especially with Alaine's continuous worrying over her, the day ended early for as it was time for Charlotte to head to Paradise. But right before Phil started to drive her to work, Annette came to drop off Thomas, who looked really glad to see her.

"Thanks for the lift, Phil," Charlotte said to the bus driver, "and sorry if riding with Thomas was inconvenient. I didn't know my mom would drop him off like that."

"Wasn't your problem to begin with. I just hate the dog." Then, Phil smiled and tipped his driver's hat at her. "Have a good day at work."

With that, he close the bus doors and drove out of the cafÃ© parking lot. Charlotte looked down at Thomas.

"Great, now I need to find you a babysitter," she said to him. He whined and pouted.

WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF!

"Listen, I have to work and I can't trust you on your own. Much less, bother with animal control and... what the heck I'm talking to a dog!" Charlotte exclaimed.

WOOF!

"Quiet you!" she said as she gave him her infamous glare. Her dog gave her a lopsided grin with his tongue sticking out.

Charlotte was about to go and tie his leash around a pole like last time when she heard someone yell "Cool! I didn't know you had a dog, Char!"

She turned around and saw Brendan running towards them. He was wearing flip-flops, khaki shorts, and a tropical blue Hawaiian floral shirt. He quickly knelt and started to pet Thomas.

"Stop! Thomas is..." she started to warn him. But to her surprise, Thomas was leaning in to his touch and was rather enjoying it.



"You little pussy cat," she said under her breath. The dog turned and gave her a less scarier dog version of the evil eye.

As Brendan petted him, he turned to Charlotte and said "Hey Char! My mom is waiting inside for you. But I should probably warn you, the place is really crowded and loud today. So you might wanna be careful while you're in there. You'll find my mom in the office."

Charlotte nodded and said "Thanks Brendan and can you watch him for me? He has a little trouble staying put."

Brendan's smile grew across his face and said a little too quickly "Sure! Oh man, I always wanted a dog, but because of my stupid step dad, I couldn't. Come on boy!"

He wrapped Thomas's leash around his hand and Charlotte watched the two run off to...somewhere on the beach.

Charlotte smile and rolled her eyes and headed towards the caf  . But before she even got 5 ft away, the smell of food and music hit her hard.

Brendan was right.

The place was packed, even from the outside. Everyone was so crowded together that Charlotte had to squeeze in between everybody, and that was harder because the music was playing so loud that she, and probably everyone else around her, couldn't hear at all. And that was when she was outside. The tables on the patio were either filled or covered with dirty plates from old costumers.

The inside of the caf   was worse. The music was up to MAX and Charlotte lost her complete ability to hear. Everyone seemed to be shouting something but she didn't know what. And it also didn't help that she ended up being squeezed in the crowd. And from what she's been able to see, a lot of tables were in a worser state than the ones outside.

By the time she managed to get behind the food counter and got into the, she hadn't realized that her hearing had returned.

"Welcome!"

Charlotte jumped and turned around and sighed in relief. It was Karen behind her. Her hair was in a bun and she was wearing a red maternity dress.

"Sorry to scare you! As you saw out there... we really need your help. The other night, some teenagers opened this place up while me and my family were home for the night and they threw a big party and trashed the place.

Luckily, the police came and got everyone out. Unfortunately, today we had a huge special that had everyone out there here in the first place and my family didn't even have time to clean up before everyone got here. The clean up crew I called had engine trouble so my Mother and Jonathan went to go help them, leaving me and Brendan to deal with this.

So, instead of being a waitress like we planned, you don't mind busting tables do you?" Karen asked.

Charlotte nodded. "Sure, but first thing's first, we need to get all these people out of here and fast!"

"Alright, the beach can offer towels and stuff since nearly everyone came here with a bathing suite at least, but their also hungry," Karen said.

Charlotte thought on this until she smacked her forehead.

"Of course! How could I be such an idiot?!" Charlotte explained, "we need to get ice cream trucks! It's 60 degrees out there and everyone's going to get heated up! We need some ice cream trucks fast!"

Karen's face brightened up. "Charlotte, you're a genius! And I know someone who can get here quickly and they also owe me a favor! And as soon as that's done, we can clean up everything and wash the tables and..."

"Karen, um, sorry to burst your bubble, but in order for me to wash the tables, I need to touch a wet towel and if I do, um..." Charlotte trailed off shyly. Thankfully, Karen caught on to what she was trying to say and laughed.

"Sorry about that. I was so caught up in this I forgot," Karen said as she went behind her desk and pulled out a bag of clothes and gave it to Charlotte, "and this is your uniform. There are some differences in it, but over all, you'll fit. Don't you worry, sweetie, we were prepared if that happened. I'll give you a few minutes to change so I can make a call."

And with that, she left.

Charlotte looked into the bag and pulled out her uniform. The tropical shirt was still the same but instead of a knee-length khaki skirt, there were a pair of khaki pants and a white apron. At the bottom of the bag was a pair of thick, white gloves. They were long and resembled real dish-washing gloves.

She looked at her clothes. They were all her size and the gloves looked nice and fitting. So, she took off her clothes and put on the uniform. She put her hair up in a pony-tail and went to look at herself in the mirror on the wall. It was big and wide enough for her to see her full reflection. But the moment she saw herself, she couldn't believe it.

She almost didn't recognize herself.

The girl in the mirror was tall, but not supermodel tall nor basketball player tall. She was naturally tall. Her arms were thin, but they had an athletic muscle in it. From her upper to lower body, she wasn't thin like the girls, but she lost a few noticable pounds. Her frame was thin, but she could see the muscles and whatever fat she had left around her waist and stomach. \*\*(1)\*\*

And her legs, despite being covered by her pants, they had thinned

out and developed muscles as well. This girl's face was now more defined, beautiful even, with her slightly tan pink skin and brown hair **\*\*(NOT LIKE CLEO'S LOOKS)**. **\*\***This girl looked out-of-place in the uniform. It looked like she would rather be on the beach in a bikini.

Who was this girl?

It wasn't until Charlotte looked into the girl's eyes and found out.

It was her.

Her eyes were all that she recognized and though she found the redness in her hair, it was very, very tainted.

She found it hard to believe that the girl in the mirror was her, but it wasn't impossible. During her "exile", she spent all her time eating healthy, drinking water, sinking until her throat hurt, on the field with Alaine practicing softball, walking Thomas, and between practicing her powers, she hadn't noticed that she was changing.

And she was glad.

She smiled at herself and, to her surprise, her smile was still the same.

KNOCK! KNOCK!

Charlotte turned to see Karen open the door with a microphone in her hand. She eyed her in the uniform.

"It's a little big on you, but you look nice. Listen, the ice cream should be here in a few, don't ask me how, and I need to you try to talk to the crowd out there. And don't ask where I got the microphone, but my family has special days. Are you ready to do this?" she asked as she handed Charlotte the microphone.

Charlotte took it. "As ready as ever." The two started to walk out the room but Charlotte smiled at her reflection once more before leaving.

At the cash register, the crowd was getting angry. Charlotte turned down the music, climbed on top of the counter and raised the mic to her mouth. **\*\*(Bold words for what she says in the mic!)\*\***

**\*\***"Alright, alright, can I please have your undivided attention," **\*\***she said. Everyone quieted down and looked at her.

**\*\***"Listen, I know some of you are hungry and want to enjoy your day at the beach. But as you can see, we're not ready for you yet. One of the managers has a few ice cream trucks on the way here and though some of you may not want that, it gives us enough time to clean up and get this day started properly," **\*\***and just as she finished that sentence, there was a chorus of music coming from outside the cafÃ©.

Immediately, everyone in the building evacuated the building and went outside. Charlotte hopped off the counter and turned to see Karen

staring at her with an awestruck look on her face.

"What?" Charlotte asked.

Karen shook her head and said "Where were you when we were having dinner rush?"

Charlotte smiled and laughed. "Come on, let's give that clean up crew a head start so we can get to business faster."

By 6:15 pm, Laguna and Jonathan had come with the clean up crew and were surprised to see that most of the trash outside and the trash on the floor in the inside of the caf   was up and already in the trashcan.

"Karen, what happened here? It was a riot before we left," Laguna asked her as the crew finished cleaning up the rest of the trash. Karen didn't say a word but pointed to Charlotte, who was cleaning up tables and putting menus down.

"I don't know how to describe it, Mother. One moment, everyone was yelling and the moment she started talking, everyone calmed down and listened. Well, at least until the ice cream came. I'm telling you, she's something special," Karen said with a smile.

But, however, Laguna was not.

"Karen, as much as I'd like for stuff like that to come naturally to her, you have to remember, Marana gave her powers that can make her influence anybody. Remember that," Laguna told her and walked away.

\* \* \*

><p>Soon afterwards, the caf   was running big time. As soon as Laguna announced to the beach that the caf   was officially ready for business, everyone practically stampeded in. The cooks were quick to make all the orders while Brendan, who was upset to be away from Thomas, helped Charlotte wait the tables. Laguna was greeting people at the entrance. Karen was working at the cash register, and Jonathan was in the kitchen with the cooks.<p>

"Man, can we hurry this up so I can go hang out with Thomas? Him and I were in the middle of pulling a few pranks on some married couples," Brendan complained to Charlotte as he was cleaning up an empty table.

Charlotte laughed. "But you had an hour and a half with him. Don't you think that's enough time with him?"

"No! It's because of Jonathan that I don't even have one! He got attacked by one when he was little and has had a vendetta against them ever since!"

"Well, you should talk to him about it. Maybe you two just misunderstand each other," Charlotte suggested.

"Oh please, he'll give me a huge lecture about caring for others and not myself and he practically kisses my mom's butt and worships the ground she walks on. I mean, I know she's pregnant with my little

sister, but she's not disabled," he sulked.

Charlotte looked at him as she got out her pen and small notebook.

"You know, it's okay to be jealous about not having your mom's undivided attention anymore," she said.

Brwndan looked at her with wide eyes and started to stutter.

"W-w-w-wh-what a-are y-you... I-I-I...I'm not jealous!" he exclaimed. And with that, he ran off.

Charlotte shook her head at him. He was definitely jealous.

Charlotte was looking at her notebook as she walked up to a table where a bunch of teenagers were sitting at and said "Welcome to Paradise Cove Caf  , what can I get you all?"

"Well, actually, I'll have a...YOU!" one of the teenagers said. Charlotte looked up and her face paled.

It was Jason and his gang.

Charlotte started to walk away but was pulled back by a hand, roughly. She turned to see it was Jason's.

"Well, so this is where you work," he said, eyeing her up and down, "nice outfit you got there. Though... I wonder what you look like under it."

Alright, now she had to get away.

She started to pry herself away from him but he wouldn't budge.

"Did you know your little dog had left me scar for life? Now there's no way I'll ever get laid again!" he said as he gritted his teeth.

"Listen, I am so sor-YELP!" Charlotte cried. His hand was starting to leave a bruise on her arm.

Then, just as he started talking again, out of nowhere, Jonathan ripped Jason's hand off of her and threw him to the floor.

"I suggest you leave now if you know what's good for you... and your friends too," he said stiffly as he glared down at him.

There was easily a glance of fear on Jason's face. He looked at his crew, who were probably thinking the same, got up and ran out the caf   altogether.

Charlotte just stared at him as Jonathan passed her. Shaking out of her gaze, she reached her hand out to him and said "Um, thanks for helping me there. I had no idea-"

He looked at her with a cold glare and she put her hand down. "Let me make this clear: I didn't do that for you. I did that because it

would have been only a matter of minutes until you remembered what you could do and expose my family. To be honest, I could care less about you being harassed by some boy you led on."

And with that, he walked away, leaving Charlotte confused, and really angry.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Alright, this is the end of this chapter!  
Woohoo!<strong>

\*\*1. Alright, though I'm gonna gets some either good or bad reviews for this, I had to say this. My mom(who has 3 degrees, so she knows what she's talking about) told me that people who are big-boned - such as Charlotte - couldn't lose those muscles. However, you can lose the fat in your skin, so you can \_look \_skinny. \*\*

\*\*So, as I was trying to word out in this chapter, Charlotte still has her big muscles, but she lost the fat in them, so she appears skinny, but not as skinny as the girls (COUGH Cleo COUGH Emma COUGH Rikki COUGH Bella)! I added the tan-skin part because, well, she's in California, one of the most sunniest places on Earth! How could she \_not \_get a tan?!\*\*

\*\*Don't reply to me with 'good story' or 'I like it' or ect. Tell me how you honestly feel about it.\*\*

\*\*Read & Review\*\*

## 18. Not-so-first-day of Mermaid School

\*\*Hey guys! Alright, I know most of you have waited FOREVER for this chapter ( I know I was the one writing it) and let me just say, this is not going to go the way Charlotte's first day should and if you read on, you'll know why.\*\*

\*\*ENJOY!\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><strong>7:00 pm, on the way to CoveMermaidian  
residenceâ€|\*\*

\*\*Charlotte's POV\*\*

Thomas and I rode with Brendan, Laguna and Karen in their SUV to their place or, in a clarified way, Laguna was driving with Karen in the passenger seat, Brendan and I were sitting in the back seats, and Thomas, with his idiotic grinning self, was in the trunk.

Jonathan decided to stay back at the cafÃ© and hitch a ride back later, which was completely fine with me. I wasn't feeling too good with being in the same car as him. And, to my personal surprise, I didn't see Riley.

I was beat-tired during the ride, but overall, had a great day. After the 'incident', the rest of the day went smoothâ€|if you could call being flirted at by dozens of boys normal. Luckily, this time Laguna

was the one to always managed to ward them off.

And Karen was right about the gloves; They worked like a charm. For every time I touched the soapy dish towel to wipe the tables, the gloves absorbed the water, but it wouldn't change me, to my relief.

The drive was silent until Karen started talking.

"So, Charlotte...how was your first day of work?" she asked.

I sighed and gave her a smile. "Well, aside from boys trying to flirt with me and your oh-so-\_lovingly \_husband being stoic, I had a pretty good day. And it didn't help that your son refused to give me back my dog."

Brendan laughed and Karen smiled at my sarcasm. Laguna just nodded and continued to look out her window.

"Well, you just...I think you had a normal day, or as normal as it can get for your case. Speaking of that, who were those boys that I saw harassing you earlier?" Karen asked.

I stiffened. I saw Laguna look at me and took notice. I had a feeling that she would want to talk to me about this later.

"Not good friends of your, are they?" Laguna asked.

I nodded. "Yeah, they're not the best people to...know. I just hope that I never see them again."

I must've said it stiffly, because, judging by the look Laguna was giving me, she probably decide to talk to me about this when I was ready.

After that, the ride went silent. The only thing that was making a sound was the radio. Who knew that Laguna was Kelly Clarkson fan?

Then, there was a turn and suddenly I noticed the van starting to enter a dark tunnel. I leaned forward from her seat and asked Laguna "Is that tunnel supposed to be there?"

She turned her head and grinned at me and gave me a mischievous smile. "You'll see."

The van drove into the tunnel, everything turned black. And I will admit, I started to panic.

"What's going on? Where are we? Where are we going? It should be impossible to see!? Where are we?" I exclaimed. I was starting to breathe heavily and started to blink my eyes really fast.

No one, not even my mom knows this, but I had developed a...well it's not a fear of the dark, but I start to feel the inability to do anything in the dark as my worst nightmare. So, even the smallest lights, like the lights coming off my alarm clock and the lights from the outside of my windows at night, gives me the best comfort.

"Don't worry, where we're going, you're going to love it," Brendan said enthusiastically.

The van increased speed and before I knew it, we were out of the tunnel and, judging from the view of my window, we were driving up some large hill that gave me a breathtaking sight of the entire beach and...wait!?

Was that Coney Island ferris wheel that I was seeing on the far right?

I leaned forward in my seat again and asked Karen "Where are we?"

She smiled and said "Look ahead. We're home!"

I looked up and gasp. At the top of the hill was a beautiful circular house that was two-stories and made up with see-through glass. There was an outside deck and by the house, I noticed that there was a big ditch in the ground.

As we pulled in front of the house, Brendan jumped out of the car, with Thomas not so far behind him, and yelled "WELCOME TO OUR CRIB!"

\* \* \*

><p><strong>3rd POV<strong>

As everyone got out, Charlotte turned around and took in the scene in front of her. Oh what she would give to have out her sketchbook and start drawing.

Not too far down the hill, there were trees surrounding the perimeter in a perfect 360 degrees. This just made the scenery look more beautiful and gave her the peacefulness that she was going to need.

"Come on Charlotte! The faster you get the tour of our place, the faster you get to see our..."\_special" \_place," Brendan said, earning a smack upside the head by Laguna, who muttered

"Don't say that! You'll make it sound like we're crazy!"

Charlotte turned around and headed into the house, and once again, she was amazed.

The interior was simple yet elegant. The ceilings were white as well as the carpet, the chairs in the living room, along with the everything else was grand. There was a small area by the windows with wooden flooring and there was a stereo. So she assumed that it was a little dance area. Then, she got a tour of the kitchen, which had granite counters and small china dishes. The chairs in the dining room were made of oak along with the short table. And in the heart of the house was a cylinder-like fireplace with a glass container over it.

Charlotte asked about the design and it turns out that the house used to be a water tower, which Brendan found pretty hilarious. After the tower stopped working, a young man decided to turn the old tower into



a house. Then, after the reconstruction, he met Laguna and became friends. But he died later from cancer. But on his will, it stated that the house belonged to Laguna. So, after years of remodeling, the house ended up the way it was today.

Gorgeous.

"Alright, so now you've seen the house. Are you ready to see our \_"special" \_place?" Karen asked, raising her eyebrow. Her mother groaned at the term.

Charlotte nodded. What else could this house hold?

Laguna went to the fireplace and held out her hand and immediately, Charlotte recognized what she was doing. She was starting to set the wood on fire.

Laguna slowly curled her hand up into a fist and the wood quickly set ablaze. Then, she turned to Karen.

"Would you like to do the honors?"

Karen smiled and nodded. "Indeed."

She repeated the same thing as her mother and the fire continued to grow until it was at the top of the glass-cylinder. Then, Charlotte let out a gasp when the fiery red flames turned blue and then... it went down as if it nothing happened.

"What was that?"she whispered to Brendan. He smiled at her.

"Wait for it."

Charlotte watched the fireplace and let out another gasp. The fireplace started to sink into the floor while the cylinder started to rise into the ceiling. Then, the entire thing was gone and the granite wall moved apart, leaving where was once a beautiful fireplace was now a dark entrance.

"Haha, and grandma wanted to put a bookshelf there instead," Charlotte heard Brendan whisper to his mom.

Laguna turned her head to them, gestured her hand to the entrance and said "Well, who's first?"

\* \* \*

><p>After descending down the stairs, Charlotte followed the family trio through what seemed to be a cave with light colors. At first, she could have sworn that under the hill was a bunch of dirt. But she remembered that Laguna had this place for a while. It probably took years to build it for it to be the way it was.<p>

Then, they stopped at another entrance. Karen looked at Charlotte and asked "Are you ready to meet our version of a moon pool?"

Charlotte didn't have time to answer as they all went in and once again, her jaw hung from her mouth.

THE CAVE WAS HUGE! No, in fact, it might have been bigger than the

moon pool on Mako Island.

The cave looked to be made of limestone and the ceiling had to be at least 100 ft high and the lights were from cool colors to neon lights. The pool, which looked probably deeper than 5 ft., was the same color as the one in Mako and there were small lanterns surrounding the pool. And in the back was a waterfall!

She looked to the side and saw a little family sitting area with a big coffee table 3 couches and a big TV , and how Laguna managed to do that she didn't know, and there was at least 5 shelves of books on the wall.

"Wow," Charlotte said.

Laguna nodded. "Indeed. Just to point out : this place is more of a cave-like indoor swimming pool than a moon pool. Though only my family knows of this place, even we get awestruck as well."

And Charlotte agreed. Then she turned to her. " Um..may I..." then she looked towards the pool. She couldn't help it. The pool was practically screaming for her to jump in. Laguna knew what she was asking for and laughed.

"Of course, but we need to..." Laguna didn't get to finish her sentence.

Charlotte made a mad dash towards the pool and, like an Olympic diver, jumped headfirst into the pool.

SPLASH!

It took a few minutes before she surfaced in all her pride and glory. Her top was shimmering and her wet hair was curved to the side of her neck. For the moment, Charlotte felt more relaxed as she's ever been in weeks. But Laguna saw something in her eyes. Something that was all too familiar to any mermaid.

Freedom.

"Well, now that you've made yourself at home, Mother and I need to find out what your powers are," Karen said as she sat down in an armchair by the pool. She wasn't even phased when the first time that the girl did was jump into the pool. Her mother made sure it had that effect when the cave was built and the pool was installed.

Charlotte gave her a surprised look. "Oh, I already know what my powers are," she said, "watch."

She turned her head towards the middle of the pool and raised her hand up in a claw-like gesture. Instantly, a stream of water started to rise up and, due to Charlotte's active imagination, the water formed into an octopus.

"I can manipulate water."

Then, she held up her hand in a 'stop' gesture, and the octopus froze solid into place.

"I can freeze it."

Then she slowly balled up her hand and the octopus melted back into the pool. She turned her head back to the two women.

"And I can also heat it, but the strange thing is that I have another power, or powers if you think about it. Watch," Charlotte said.

This power was a bit difficult since these particular powers required nearly the same hand gesture as manipulating water. But she was able to find the difference. She turned back to the pool and raised her hand again and did a similar hand gesture to the first hand gesture, only her fingers were more open than the clawed gesture, and twisted her wrist. **\*(1)\*\***

Instantly, the entire pool ended up turning into deep-blue jelly. Then, a few seconds later, the jelly turned back into water.

Charlotte heard a gasp from behind. She turned around and saw Laguna looking at her with a saddened look on her face. Karen also noticed the look and covered for her.

"Excuse my mother, it's just that she hadn't seen that power for centuries," she said to Charlotte. She nodded hesitantly, concerned about Laguna, and said,

"This power allows me to turn water into jelly and the next one is sort of my favorite."

She raised her left hand out at the water, causing it to rise again and formed a bubble. Then, she turned her hand sideways, turning the bubble into a medium-sized turtle. Next, using her other hand, she opened it and twisted her wrist, giving the turtle a jelly type form. Lastly, using her right hand, she turned her hand into a fist, and made a punching gesture in the air. **\*(2)\*\***

The turtle solidified and fell into the water. Charlotte dove into the pool to retrieve it. A few minutes later, she surfaced and gave the turtle figurine to Laguna, who now looked like she was going to cry.

Laguna put on a pair of gloves, similar to the ones Charlotte used at work, and took the figurine out of her hand to look at it.

Without choking on her sobs, she said "I know those powers. It comes from the sea caves in Ireland. But, for you to have gotten this power, you had to have been in that moon pool. So either you managed to travel to Ireland over night, or the moon pool that changed you was truly unique."

Laguna started to look at the turtle as if it had significant value and hugged it in her chest. Charlotte turned to Karen and gave her a \_'you-need-to-tell-me-what's-going-on\_' look.

Then, something occurred to Karen.

"Mother," she said, " is it possible that... well I don't know how to word this."

Laguna sniffed one last time and wiped the tears before they came

from her eyes. "Karen, what are you trying to say, dear?" she asked.

"Well, is it possible that the reason that Charlotte even has those powers is because... is because she was in an artificial moon pool?" Karen suggested.

Call it common sense or call it something else, but Charlotte quickly ducked under the water and closed her eyes.

...

CRASH!

Charlotte resurfaced and saw that the turtle she created was shattered into bits all over the floor and Laguna's hands were slightly bleeding. Her face went from the saddened expression she wore a few minutes ago to pure anger.

"Mother!" Karen exclaimed.

Laguna turned her head and commanded "Karen! At the moment, I am unable to teach Charlotte the basics at the moment and I'm leaving you the responsibility to teach her! And if she has any questions, you are going to answer them! Now, if you excuse me, I have to make a VERY important call!"

Laguna angrily exited the pool room and entered the cave. After a few minutes, there was a loud vibration, signaling that Laguna was inside the house.

"Oh mother..." Karen sighed.

Charlotte looked at her. "What was she so upset about?"

Karen leaned forward out of her chair and looked at her. "Sweetie, let me ask you this: Do you believe that people should know about the moon pools?"

"No. Well, in my case, I guess it depends if that person is able to handle the responsibility of such a huge secret. But in general, no one can know without making it turn into some money-making scheme," Charlotte explained.

Karen smiled at her answer. No doubt that her personal experience would have her thinking like that, but any person that came across a moon pool knew that it held value that had yet to be understood.

"Good answer, but it's more than that. You should know, once you're a mermaid, your one for life. Truly, once your swimming 600m/ph and diving at impossible depths, there's a sense of freedom that anyone can fall in love with. And your right, the moon pools are not on this world for profit. I'm sure my mother gave you a briefing on that merpeople are a separate species, but you must know, moon pools are the birthplace for merpeople."

Charlotte was not amused. "Yeah, I know. On a full moon, any human who jumps into the moon pool turns into a mermaid and gets powers."

"No, that's technically the process for land-transformed mermaids. I meant natural-born mermaids, as in mermaids that were actually born in moon pools," Karen said, "though I know you've been in plenty of...sex-ed classes, since mermen have gone extinct, mermaids have adapted to new ways of reproducing. For example, on a Blue Moon, mermaids lay eggs in the pool, and in some cases, the moon pool gives tails to the eggs that hatch or tropical fish that live by lay their eggs there as well. Your going to have to ask my mother about this later."

Charlotte noticed that she looked a little...flustered about the topic. It didn't sound embarrassing to her.

\_I guess mermaid health class is as embarrassing as human health class,\_ she thought. But something occurred to her.

Why did Laguna rush out like that anyways?

"Hey Karen, what's an artificial moon pool?" she asked.

She watched as Karen froze up at the question. Was it that bad?

"Uh, Karen? Yoo-hoo? Are you there?" Charlotte asked, waving her hand in front of the her face, trying to snape the woman out of her trance.

After a few minutes, Karen snapped out of it and gave the teen mermaid an apologetic look.

"Sorry, I... didn't expect you to remember that," she said sheepishly, "and to answer your question: You can think of it like a synthetic moon pool. It's not impossible, just extremely rare."

"What? To build or to make it work like a regular moon pool?"

"Both. It's extremely rare to make one because the site has to be precise, must be near the ocean or a river, must have a close and full view of the moon, and you'd need a lot of moon stones. But the big problem is that the site should be old, like an old volcano, and you pretty much can't find moon stones anywhere else except the moon pools itself. And taking them is a messy business since it requires drilling into the stone to get them and the results would be that the moon pool all together ends up deactivated. It would be there for show, but it would never again work as it did before.

Or, as Brendan would say, in kid speak: The moon pool is broken beyond prepare.

So, creating one is out of the question. And for it to work is another story. I guess you can say that even if you successfully managed to build a moon pool, the next step would be for it to work. The whole piece of the puzzle depends on the full moon. If it works, you can say that the picture of the puzzle would be finding out what powers you gained. And that is the most rare of it all," Karen concluded.

Suddenly, Charlotte had a good idea why Laguna left.

"So, what you're saying is that the moon pool that changed me was an artificial one? As in Marana," Karen flinched at the name slightly, "spent her free time over the years creating a moon pool to change me and gathered moon stones from different moon pools so that I'd have more powers than before?"

It surprised Karen that she caught on so quick. She rose out of her chair and carefully sat on the edge of the pull, next to Charlotte, in criss-cross position.

"Sweetie, you have to understand this. My mother vowed on her entire life to make sure Marana didn't find you. And if you haven't noticed, our little friend under the sea managed to outsmart her and found you. She watched you since the day you were born to the day you received your tail and your powers, how you abused them, and all till the day you lost them all. My mother can't keep up with her because she can't see her next move.

Mentally, she sees a girl who can easily be played like a puppet and a human weapon. But in her heart, she can see the mermaid who was like a sister to her. Believe me, she does care about you, but she has a lot on her plate."

She watched as Charlotte laid her head on the ground. She doubt what she wanted in life. Maybe at one point, she thought she could handle this, but now was a different story.

"You know what?" Charlotte asked.

"Hmm?"

"I never wanted to be a mermaid. I mean, before I left Australia, I promised someone that I would never go near a moon pool for the rest of my life. I never meant to break that promise, but what can I do now? All I ever wanted out of life was to live a normal life. I want to have friends to hang out with, go out and date guys I like, and I can't even do that now," Charlotte said,

"Karen, your husband was right about me. I'm selfish, arrogant, and stupid to think I can handle something that only a few people can cherish. I should have never came to Paradise that day." She felt a tear fall down her cheek.

This just couldn't be happening to her. It seemed that just when the supernatural was done with her, it pulls her back in and places her in a situation worse than the last. Suddenly, she felt Karen's smooth hand place her head on her lap.

"Karen, you can't touch me! I'm still wet-" she was cut off by Karen.

"I know what your about to say," Karen said calmly, "and don't worry. When I'm this far along in this pregnancy, my tail goes away. Think of it like my maternity leave from being a mermaid."

Then, she looked at Charlotte's tail and started to comb her fingers through Charlotte's hair. "Listen to me. Don't listen to my husband or to anything that he says about you. He won't understand the struggles that my family goes through, no matter how long he's been with us. He doesn't understand that as merpeople, we don't have the

luxuries that normal people do, which is why I married him.

He grew up at a young age to provide for his family. But as Fate would have it, he was soon all alone. He came from a background where he was supposed to be cold and strict. And because of that, and because I love him, that's why I married him and let him in on the secret. Plus, you think my unborn child wasn't made out of love?  
\*\*(3)\*\*

Charlotte, as much as you don't think it, you have no idea how lucky you are. You know, natural-born mermaids aren't too fond of land transformed mermaids. And if they knew, you are the poster child for why they're so against them. But you beat the odds. Out of all land-transformed mermaids in this world, how many went as far as you did and got a second chance? Easy, none. You beat that odd and to me, that's an amazing feat. But like I told my mother, your still young and have a lot to live for and who knows? Maybe you'll find someone to share your gift with after all.

Now, how about you show me how you made that figurine and make more of them?"

Charlotte looked up at Karen's smiling face. "I should have known that you'd be the one to give me advice like that. However, I-"

Her vision blurs and all fades to black...

\* \* \*

><p><em>Darkness...that's all Charlotte could see. There wasn't any source of light anywhere around her.<em>

\_Suddenly, it feels as if she's spinning around and the darkness turns into light and the next thing she knew, she was underwater.\_

\_She looked down and saw that she was in her mermaid form.\_

\_She started to swim around and found herself near a coral reef. It wasn't as beautiful as the one in Australia, but it was pretty close.\_

\_As she swam along, she acknowledged how beautiful the corals and sea anemones were. They ranged from blue to yellow, o orange to green and...wait! What was that?\_

\_At the edge of the reef was an unusually, big oyster. It was grey, but it was about the size of her hand.\_

\_As soon as she went in and grabbed it, she felt something move behind her.\_

\_She spun around to see what it was, but nothing was there.\_

\_So, instead, she turned her attention back to the oyster. She tried to pry it open, but it seemed as if it was glued shut.\_

\_Suddenly, it felt like the temperature dropped and Charlotte heard something big moving behind her.\_

\_She spun around again, trying to see what it was. But there was nothing.\_

\_"Who's there?" she asked. Then, she covered her mouth. How could she be talking underwater?\_

\_Then, she remembered her talk with Laguna on the pier. Could she be having one of the visions she was telling her about?\_

\_She looked around and saw a murky shadow moving towards her...and it was HUGE!\_

\_Soon, she saw silver scales on the objects back and spikes all over it's body.\_

\*\*\_But little did Charlotte know...\_\*\*

\_That voice? Marana's! Why was she hearing her?\_

\_Suddenly, the shadow started to swim towards her at full speed, moving its body side to side like a snake. Finally, she got a good look at what it was.\_

\_And it was horrifying.\_

\*\*\_She shouldn't have touched the water...\_\*\*

\_The creature's head was the same as a cottonmouth snake, only more monstrous and it's fangs widely exposed at her. It's body was of a serpent, but you could see the claws on its webbed feet wiggling at her. It's tail was covered in thorns. Then, it's eyes opened and two beady-red eyes stared down at her hungrily.\_

\_Charlotte screamed in terror as the creature opened its mouth and swam at her.\_

\_She curled herself into a ball and held the oyster close to her chest.\_

\_She heard a shrill before everything fades to black...\_

\* \* \*

><p>"AAAAAAAHHH!"<p>

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Alright guys, what did you all think of this chapter? (STILL AIMING FOR OVER 100 REVIEWS!) Did you like what you learned? And <strong>\*\*what's up with the SUPER SCARY vision Charlotte had and what did it mean?\*\*

\*\*1 and 2.) Alright, after searching the web, I couldn't find the precise way to describe Bella's hand gestures, so I came up with them as closely as I could. Tell me what you think.\*\*

\*\*3. Now we know something about Jonathan. Is there more to him then we've been told?\*\*

\*\*If you guys want to see what the Cove/Mermaidian household and the



cave-like indoor pool looks like, the links are on my profile and feel free to comment on how they look. \*\*\*\*P.S. For the house, I recommend that for some of you to use the computer to look at the house instead of your tablet.\*\*

\*\*Alright, now I want to know from the readers on what you think should happen next! \*\*

\*\*Don't reply to me with 'good story' or 'I like it' or ect. Tell me how you honestly feel about it.\*\*

\*\*MOST OF ALL...\*\*

\*\*READ & REVIEW!\*\*

## 19. Attack of the Water Snake Pt 1

\*\*Hello everyone. Welcome to this chapter of RtaNB and let me tell you, you are going and for LOVE this chapter! I finally brought in Lewis a bit and we start from where we left off!\*\*

\*\*Now with that said and done...ENJOY! \*\*

\* \* \*

><p><strong>9:00 pm, Charlotte's house...<strong>

By 9 pm, Laguna and Karen had decided to drop Charlotte and Thomas off at her place. As the van pulled into Charlotte's driveway, Charlotte said "Thanks for the lift. This afternoon was... interesting."

Now that was an understatement. This afternoon, she was supposed to start training, but all she got was possible answers to how she was changed, which she gradually accepted, and a vision that will most likely give her nightmares the second she closed her eyes tonight.

\*\*\_Flashback...\_\*\*

\_"AAAAAAAHHH!" Charlotte screamed as she fell backwards into the water and started to splash around, like she was drowning and trying to find land. She kept going under, and kept gasping for a breath that she rarely needed since she was in mermaid form.\_

\_"CHARLOTTE! CHARLOTTE! MOTHER!" she heard a woman yell, "HELP! Something's wrong with Charlotte!"\_

\_She continued to splash in the water helplessly ,like her life depended on it, until she heard an older, feminine voice shout "Brendan, go help her!"\_

\_She heard two big splashes and the next thing she knew, she felt someone hold her and stop her from splashing around. Charlotte heard a young boy's voice say "Charlotte, calm down! Nothing and no one is going to hurt you. Just take deep breaths and slowly open your eyes."\_

\_Charlotte did as she was told and took a few breaths, which was hard

because she was shaking from the vision. Then, she opened her eyes and was surprised Brendan and Thomas beside her. But what truly got her was, instead of the clothes he was wearing earlier, his chest was bare and where his legs should have been, was a long, light blue tail.\_

\_"Your...your... you're a merboy?" Charlotte asked with a stutter. He just gave her a cheeky smile as he led her back to the edge of the pool.\_

\_"I swear, I'm in the other part of the cave, playing with the dog, and you start screaming your lungs off. I can't catch a break once," he muttered. Then, Laguna came and knelt beside her as Thomas got out the pool and sat beside Brendan.\_

\_"Charlotte, are you ok? What happened? And why are you shaking?" Karen got up and asked her.\_

\_Laguna looked at her daughter. "What do you think, Karen? She had a vision! And by the looks of it, it scared the daylights out of her!"\_

\_Then, she looked back at Charlotte, who was still shaking. "I want you to tell me **\*\*exactly\*\*** what you saw."\_

\_Despite the fear that she was feeling, Charlotte recounted the events that she saw, to the darkness to her near-death of the snake. Then, Karen's eyes went to Charlotte's chest.\_

\_"Is that the oyster?" she asked. Charlotte looked down and saw that she still had the oyster from the reef.\_

\_"B-but how was that possible? It was just a vision! There was no way this thing was real... wasn't it?" Charlotte asked. Karen took the oyster from her and examined it.\_

\_"Sweetie, if there's one thing you should know about Mother's visions, or should I say **\*\*YOUR \*\***visions, it is that no matter **\*\*what \*\***you think, some things are closer than you think," Karen said, her eyes still on the oyster.\_

\_" Or, in kid speak: Gram's had a somewhat nasty habit of seeing the future and taking an item from it. Nothing of importance, or so we think, but just a small item of proof to say that she was there," Brendan said, earning a playful glare from his mother.\_

\_"Yeah, what he said, but that doesn't explain the monster you saw in your vision," Karen said, "but by the looks of it, just leave this shell in a bucket full of cold water, sand and salt, and I'll say that you'll be the owner of a fresh, newly, fresh pearl in a few days."\_

\_Karen gave the oyster back to Charlotte and continued "I think you're in a special predicament now. You see, my mother has this scale that goes from 1 to 10 that she uses-or rather-used to see what type of visions she had. If it was a level 1, then the vision is usually seen is a blurry shot or a level 2, a TV show on a television screen. Now a level 10...well, you just had one. That particular level usually acts like a messenger and usually means that danger is coming. It's so life-like that it sometimes mean that you were

actually there.\_

\_Now, this leads me to my next hunch. If I'm right about the artificial moon pool, then maybe I'm right about my next theory."\_

\_Laguna groaned. "Karen, as much as I love you, your 'hunches' are going to be the death of me."\_

\_Karen chuckled lightly and looked at Charlotte. 'Sweetie, if you don't mind me asking this: aside from the first powers, did those girls from Australia show any other kind of powers?'"\_

\_Charlotte shook her head. "No. Though if you're talking about the weather powers, then yes."\_

\_Karen didn't say anything and gave Laguna a look. And from what Charlotte could see, Laguna's facial expression was a mix of amusement and satisfaction. It was like the two were sharing an inside joke.\_

\_What did they know that she didn't?\_

**\*\*\_Flashback ends...\_\*\***

However, Charlotte did get some lesson on mermaid history later (Laguna was rather happy to explain the reproduction of natural-born mermaids) when Karen tried to take her mind off the vision.

"No problem dear. Besides, this might be a regular thing soon enough," Karen,"but I suggest that you better go in with Thomas before your mother decides to think that you were kidnapped."

"How do you know that?" Charlotte asked.

Karen pointed to a window that was near the livingroom and Charlotte leaned into the front seat to see her mother's shadow was peering through the blinds before she moved away. Charlotte rolled her eyes.

"I swear, as soon as I had gotten out of the hospital a month ago, she's been watching me like a hawk," she said.

Karen and Laguna gave her a concerned look. She was in the hospital?

Karen shook her head and said "Charlotte, she's your mother, as in, you came out of her womb. She's supposed to worry over you. I should know. I worry over Brendan all the time. And as much as he hates it, he knows that I only do it because I love him. I'm sure your mother just trying to watch out for you."

Charlotte sighed and nodded. "Maybe your right, but I just wish things could be different between her and I. We used to be so close and honest with each other and now all I do is lie to her, and I've done that for the past year or two! I just wish that things were different and maybe...maybe I could tell her everything one day, like we use to. Listen, I've got to go. See you tomorrow."

Charlotte opened the car door and hopped out with Thomas not far

behind her. After she closed the door, she waved goodbye to the two women and headed towards her house.

Once she got in, she went into the livingroom to greet her mother-who tried to play off that she wasn't just watching her daughter through the window-was sitting on the couch, watching TV.

"Hey mom," she said.

Annette turned around and smiled at her. "Hey sweetie, how was your first day of work?"

Charlotte shrugged. "It was good. I took a few orders, got familiar with the staff, and for some unknown reason, all the teenage guys who came during lunch seemed to be flirting with me."

Annette laughed. "Well, that doesn't surprise me. You've always been a beautiful girl, but since that Lewis boy broke up with you and your time in Atlanta, you haven't been so sure anymore. But lately, you've changed...for the better. I mean, look at you. You're helpful around the house, doing all these activities at school, you have friends, you have a job, and though I never saw you as a dog lover, I must say...I am so proud to call you my little girl."

Annette got up and went to hug her daughter. As she embraced her, Charlotte couldn't help but cry on the inside.

\* \* \*

><p>A few minutes afterwards, Charlotte went upstairs to her bathroom to take a bath. After drawing the bath water, Charlotte didn't even bother taking off her clothes and just jumped into the tub with her clothes on.<p>

And 20 seconds later, her tail emerged.

While Charlotte was washing herself, she couldn't help but think about the exchange she had with her mom downstairs.

What was she supposed to do? Annette trusted her and all her only daughter seems to do is lie to her. In fact, there's never been a day when she could lie to her mom so easily!

Alright, the first time she was a mermaid, she knew she couldn't tell her mother so soon, but then she lost her tail and then, she lost reason to tell her. Now she has it back-and in a new color, she must add- and she's back to the lies. But sheknew this was going to be happening often. She thought about how her mother said that she's changed.

Mentally, she had matured more and has began to acted more grown up since last year. Physically, she had bnever saw herself as beautiful. Sure she thought she was pretty, but not beautiful. Then, when she spent the rest of herJunior year in Atlanta, the girls there made her feel so bad that she wasn't even good enough to look at. Now, teenage guys are flirting with her like nothing before.

Personally, she wondered how the girls did it with their parents. But now, its plain and simple to her: their parents would have wanted them to be normal. But they all liked being different.

But Charlotte's case was entirely different. She didn't want to be a mermaid. Once she moved to California, all she wanted to do was start over and start fresh. Re-invent herself. She had no intention on repeating her past or anything like that. And now, she had to live with this tail again!

What am I going to do? Charlotte thought. She kept thinking about her current 'situation' in such deep thought that she didn't hear someone knocking on the bathroom door until she heard the twisting of the knob.

"Charlotte?" her mother asked through the door.

Charlotte sat right up and panic. Instantly, she held her hand over the bath water and it immediately started to boil and evaporate.

"Charlotte, are you o.k. in there?" her mother asked.

Charlotte started to panic and decided to stall. "I'm o.k, mom. My feet were just aching."

Yeah, if she had them at the moment.

"Charlotte can you please open the door?"

Charlotte looked down at the tub and realized it was halfway empty. So she brought up her other hand and the water was evaporating more.

"Alright, in a second," Charlotte said. Suddenly, she felt her lower half burning and looked down to see that the water in the tub was gone and she was back in her clothes.

She quickly jumped out of the tub, removed her clothes and put on a robe, mess with her hair and made it damp- no tail was produced from this- and quickly went and unlocked the door. She opened it and gave her mom a fake smile.

"Hey mom, what's up?" Charlotte asked casually, or as casual as she could.

Annette gave her a look and asked "Charlotte, why did you lock the door? It's not like I haven't seen you naked before."

Charlotte blushed at that comment. If only she knew that she wasn't truly exposed when she takes a bath.

"Sorry, I wanted some alone time. So, what did you need?"

"Oh, nothing really. I just got a message from someone with a deep voice earlier today. I think it might've been a prank call but he said he needed you to Skype with him when you got home. Should I be worried?" her mom gave her a concerned look.

Charlotte her head. "No, maybe it's someone I know. Did you get a name?"

"No, he hanged up before I could ask," her mom said, "and are you

o.k.?"

"Yeah, is there anything else you need," Charlotte asked, a little hurriedly.

Her mom shook her head and was about to leave the bedroom until she turned around.

"Charlotte?"

"Hmm?"

"You're not doing drugs, are you?" she asked.

"MOM!"

"Alright, alright. Good night," her mom said as she left the room. After Charlotte heard the 'click' on her door, she came out the bathroom and fell backwards onto her bed. Then, she grabbed a pillow and covered it over her face as she groaned outwardly.

Drugs?! Really?! She knew she would have given off some sort of vibe, but was it really \_that \_kind of vibe?

Suddenly, she remembered the message that her mother relayed to her. She jumped up, made a grab for her computer, put it on her lap and opened it, and made a beeline to Skype.

Unfortunately, no one was online. However, she had a video message and it was, from her own guess, Lewis. It had been awhile since they last talked and she planned on telling him how training went and maybe, he could help figure out what that monster from the vision was.

She clicked on the message and Lewis's filled the screen.

\_( Italicized for Lewis)\_

\_"Charlotte, if you're getting this, then you have finally got back to me, but not in time for us to talk.\_

\_Listen, I've done some research for an y moon occurences around 1010 C.E., and I found a few connections. You see, the night Ane'lie - your very first life - created the storm, she had created a \*\*very \*\*powerful blue moon that lasted for about a decade, at least. This blue \_\_moon was created due to the vows she and Laguna made, altering the effects that bring us here today." \_

Then, he brought out a thick-looking notebook and flipped through the pages and read,

"\_Every few years, the anniversary of the moon appears on different days. You would think it was that it would stay on the same day, but like any outside events or games, they can be pushed back for another day. So, with that, I also found out the connections between the moon, you, and ...every other natural disaster that cost the lives of hundreds of people," Lewis said, looking rather disturbed.\_

Charlotte, however, looked like she was going to be sick. What had

happened between her and the anniversaries?

\_"I didn't want to tell you, but I just did. Since the anniversary could happen any day, it just so happened that after a while of trying to find one of the days the anniversary occurred, I landed in the Dust bowl Days. I went through some american history records and found out that just a few matter of months before dust storms started, the causes of the storm - which you know as how the dirt turned into sand - a mexican girl who came with her families to the Americas was just about our age, or maybe younger, came to the plains to help get money from farming. However, the first few days after she came, the effects of the drought started to set in and I found out this:\_"

\_"The anniversary of the storm/ blue moon happened the night before the first dust storm. Then the next day, the girl went missing after the storm hit and was never to be seen again. Her name was Carmenta Hortense and I believe that she was one of your past lives who sadly got controlled by Marana and lost her life while starting the beginning of the dust storms."\_"

Charlotte covered her mouth with her hands and started to cry. She knew the Dust Bowl took many lives over the years, but did she really cause them? Alright, to anyone else, it wouldn't matter because it wasn't her, but those past lives live up to her. They showed how far she came over the years. If one of her past self could do that much damage, then what else was Charlotte capable of?

Charlotte felt her tears fall onto her hand and in a quick motion, she paused the message, and ran to lock her bedroom door. She waited 20 second to see if she was going to fall on the floor in her mermaid form, but nothing happened.

\_"\*\*I'm going to have to ask Laguna about that the next time I see her,\*\*\_"Charlotte thought.

Sighing in relief, she walked back to her bed and continued the message.

\_"Charlotte, if Laguna is going to be your mentor, then she might try to keep secrets from you. And not that I blame her, but you and I, of all people, know that lies can only lead to hurt. I honestly don't think hat what happened in whatever past life you had defines ou, but that's only if you let it. Now, I've got to go. It's late and I think you should be asleep.\_"

\_"Sleep tight Charlotte," Lewis said.\_"

The message ended and Charlotte closed her laptop and put it away.

How Lewis can be so forgiving sometimes, she would never know. But it was nice to know that he would still help her despite everything that happened between them. Really, she hurt the guy's friends and girlfriend and he talks to her as if nothing happened!

He truly was one of a kind.

But in the mean time, she respected the fact that Laguna wasn't quite ready to tell her everything yet. After all, she was her mentor. She

had to trust her in order for everything to work. But she still felt uncomfortable about everything.

Suddenly, she felt something bang against her door and a loud whining sound from behind.

WOOF! WOOF!

Knowing this was Thomas, Charlotte jumped from her bed and unlocked her door. Her dog trotted in, giving her a "you're-an-idiot" look before he went and jumped on her bed. She followed him and got into bed herself after she turned the ceiling light off.

'Well, I think we've both had enough excitement for one do you think?" she asked Thomas.

He let out a whine and she noticed that his eyelids were starting to drop.

"I'll take that as a yes," she muttered, "goodnight."

She turned off the light from her lamp and pulled the bedcovers over her as she started to sleep.

...

"AAAAAAAAAAHHHHH!"

\* \* \*

><p><strong>So, what do you think of Charlotte and her feelings?<strong>

\*\*By the way, I have something to say. On August 17, I had received my 83rd review and...let me show you what it said.\*\*

\*\*"shit hater chapter 1 . Aug 17 \*\*

\*\*This story is shit! Charlotte was a terrible character and a total bitch, anyone who behaves like that deserves to be hated! NOBODY likes charlotte other then you so quit trying to impose your stupid ideas and notions on everyone! Poorly written, unsubstantiated piece of crap! #giveitup #loser."\*\*

\*\*Though I deleted this comment, I have to say... I was NOT discouraged. So listen up; I DON'T CARE if you think Charlotte is the scum of the Earth or not, but NO ONE is allowed to post such negativity on my story whatsoever and for those who do I must say this.\*\*

\*\*You have no heart nor care to tell when someone is actually TRYING to make people see that not everyone is completely the villain and that they ACTUALLY have feelings too. I will not stand for this intolerance!\*\*

\*\*So...\*\*

\*\*READ&REVIEW!\*\*



## 20. Attack of the Water Snake Pt 2

**\*\*Hello everyone! I just wanted to thank everyone who read my last chapter and thank you for the support from that nasty comment I had received.\*\***

**\*\*Now...ENJOY!\*\***

\* \* \*

><p><em><strong>Previously...<strong>\_

\_Karen gave the oyster back to Charlotte and continued "I think you're in a special predicament now. You see, my mother has this scale that goes from 1 to 10 that she uses-or rather-used to see what type of visions she had. If it was a level 1, then the vision is usually seen is a blurry shot or a level 2, a TV show on a television screen. Now a level 10...well, you just had one. That particular level usually acts like a messenger and usually means that danger is coming. It's so life-like that it sometimes mean that you were actually there.' "\_

\_\*\*...\*\*\_

\_"Hey mom," she said.\_

\_Annette turned around and smiled at her. "Hey sweetie, how was your first day of work?"\_

\_Charlotte shrugged. "It was good. I took a few orders, got familiar with the staff, and for some unknown reason, all the teenage guys who came during lunch seemed to be flirting with me."\_

\_Annette laughed. "Well, that doesn't surprise me. You've always been a beautiful girl, but since that Lewis boy broke up with you and your time in Atlanta, you haven't been so sure anymore. But lately, you've changed...for the better. I mean, look at you. You're helpful around the house, doing all these activities at school, you have friends, you have a job, and though I never saw you as a dog lover, I must say...I am proud to call you my little girl."\_

\_\*\*...\*\*\_

\_"I didn't want to tell you, but I just did. Since the anniversary could happen any day, it just so happened that after a while of trying to find one of the days the anniversary occurred, I landed in the Dust bowl Days. I went through some american history records and found out that just a few matter of months before dust storms started, the causes of the storm - which you know as how the dirt turned into sand - a mexican girl who came with her families to the Americas was just about our age, or maybe younger, came to the plains to help get money from farming. However, the first few days after she came, the effects of the drought started to set in and I found out this:\_

\_The anniversary of the storm/ blue moon happened the night before the first dust storm. Then the next day, the girl went missing after the storm hit and was never to be seen again. Her name was Carmenta Hortense and I believe that she was one of your past lives who sadly got controlled by Marana and lost her life while starting the

beginning of the dust storms."\_

\*\*...\*\*

\_"AAAAAAAAAAHHHHH!"\_

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Outside of Charlotte's house...<strong>

Karen and Laguna didn't really leave after they dropped off Charlotte. Instead, they just swapped cars and sat outside her house.

"Mother, do we really have to do this? What if somebody sees us or something happens? Do you want us to appear as stalkers?!" Karen exclaimed.

"Yes, we do. After Charlotte had that vision, I couldn't just drop her off and be done with it! That vision \*\*\_had \_\*\*to be a warning and I even went through my own memories and still can't find the creature that Charlotte saw.

Plus, while I'm sitting here, I need to think of the next lesson I plan to teach her tomorrow anyways. Afterall, how could Charlotte or any of those girls not know about the other ones yet. I mean, for Charlotte, it still would have been possible for her to inherited invisibility, but the fact that \*\*none\*\* of them know makes me surprisingly happy," Laguna said.

And Karen couldn't agree more. Though most land-transformed mermaids don't know this, they have more powers than just the ones that the moon pools gave them.

\*\*\_Flashback...\_\*\*

\_(Karen's POV)\_

\_After getting over the big shock that Charlotte had receive\_\_d a level 10 vision, I had a know to how powerful she was - mermaid wise, I must say.\_

\_I gave the oyster back to Charlotte and continued "I think you're in a special predicament now. You see, my mother has this scale that goes from 1 to 10 that she uses-or rather-used to see what type of visions she had. If it was a level 1, then the vision is usually seen is a blurry shot or a level 2, a TV show on a television screen. Now a level 10...well, you just had one. That particular level usually acts like a messenger and usually means that danger is coming. It's so life-like that it sometimes mean that you were actually there.\_

\_Now, this leads me to my next hunch. If I'm right about the artificial moon pool, then maybe I'm right about my next theory."\_

\_I heard my mother groan behind me."Karen, as much as I love you, your 'hunches' are going to be the death of me."\_

\_I rolled my eyes and laughed. Until this afternoon, she wasn't

having the greatest day. I chuckled a bit at the thought and looked at Charlotte.\_

\_"Sweetie, if you don't mind me asking this, but aside from the initial powers, did any of those girls from Australia show any other particular powers?" I asked her hesitantly.\_

\_From what Mother told me, Charlotte's past is such a touchy subject. And I could understand if she didn't want to talk about it. I mean, to tell people who you were once evil- no, I can't call her that- mean and then nice isn't the best way to gain someone's trust, but honesty has to start somewhere.\_

\_But Charlotte didn't look phased at all. She shook her head and said "No. Though if you're talking about the weather powers, then yes."\_

\_Now this surprised me. Even for a year old land-transformed mermaid, some of the powers from a natural-born mermaid should have settled in by now. But if those girls haven't figured them out yet, then that means that Charlotte is one step ahead of them.\_

\_I looked into my mother's eyes and saw that she was thinking the same thing. And judging by her facial expressions, she was a happy camper knowing this. And then I looked at Charlotte, who was confused as ever.\_

\_Looks like mermaid training is going to be fun.\_

\_(POV ends)\_

\*\*\_Flashback ends...\_\*\*

Must have felt good for Charlotte to finally tell someone about the things she did, but Karen knew that there was someone she really wanted to tell her secrets to.

\_"Maybe your right, but I just wish things could be different between her and I. We used to be so close and honest with each other and now all I do is lie to her, and I've done that for the past year or two! I just wish that things were different and maybe...maybe I could tell her everything one day, like we use to..."\_

Karen heard the sorrow in Charlotte's voice when she said that and it really bugged her.

"Mother, would it be possible if... if Charlotte was able to tell her mother the truth?" she asked Laguna. The tone of Charlotte's voice rang in her head and it continued to sadden her.

A mother is supposed to be the one you're supposed to have a special bond with, the one you can tell anything to and always be by your side. And the idea of not telling your own mother the truth and constantly telling lies to her had to hurt, especially if the truth was as big as Charlotte's.

Laguna shook her head. "I know what you're thinking Karen and the answer is no. Trust me, if I had it my way, she could have told her on the spot, or at least let her know that she lives in a world where everything is not what it seems to be. Either way, Charlotte can't

allow anyone close to her or else she's going to give Marana new puppets to play with. It's just safer for both."

Karen looked at her mother. "For them or for you?"

"Karen, I-"

"No, listen to me. You agreed to train Charlotte and teach her how to defend herself against Marana, but did you agree to her personal feelings? No, and it was obvious that she's sad. She doesn't show it because she wants to be strong, but she is terrified and so sad. Hell, did you even ask her about how she felt about being a mermaid? Because I can tell that she's against it, but she's working through it.

No one needs to tell lies anymore. Sooner or later, there will be a day when Charlotte will want to find out all the things about her past, things you didn't tell her and when that happens, she won't be able to trust you like she does now," Karen said to her mother.

Laguna looked at her and knew she was right. Things happened in the past that can greatly affect Charlotte's progress as, not only a mermaid, but as a human being. And she knew that one day, the girl will want to know her past, or rather her past lives and then she'll ask questions. And she knows Charlotte will. Curiosity has killed her more than she knows.

"Karen, it's not like I'm afraid\*\* of\*\* her. I'm afraid \*\*for \*\*her. In this life, she's seen and been through so much that it would be overwhelming if I told her about her past," Laguna reasoned.

"So, it's better to hurt her than to tell her the truth? Believe me, Mother, I know the truth can hurt, but it's better to know than to not know at all. She's not Ane'lie, Mother. She may be one of her many lives, but she's not her," Karen concluded.

"I know, but there are times when she acts so much like her at times, you wouldn't believe it," Laguna said, "However, I-"

She was interrupted by a high-pitched scream and a loud, anomalistic roar...and it came from Charlotte's house.

"AAAAAAAHHHHH!"

\* \* \*

><p><strong>A few minutes earlier, in Charlotte's bedroom...<strong>

After Charlotte tuned off the lights and went to bed, something murky was happening in the bathroom.

...

Thomas opened his eyes and perked his ears up in alarm. Something wasn't right.

...

At the bottom of the bathtub, a large stream of murky water started to rise from the drain. It grew and expanded until it was as huge as the bathtub and as wide as the a door. Then, it started to take a shape.

...

Thomas quietly jumped off of the bed and walked around the room, carefully listening for any sudden movements.

...

The water started to turn into thick, rough, scaly skin; it's skin turned to form a one of a snake, long and slithery; it's head was of a cottonmouth snake, black and with fangs that are full of venom; it grew a long, narrow horn on its forehead and it's eyes were glowing yellow...

with a hint of red.

...

Thomas found himself staring at Charlotte's bathroom door. something was definitely wrong.

...

The creature assumed a complete form and watched as another stream of murky water came up from the drain. It trailed beside the creature and covered the door knob that led to Charlotte's room. It started to add pressure and finally, the knob turned.

...

Thomas watched as the knob turned and got ready to bark. He had a bad feeling about this.

...

After hearing a 'click' sound from the knob, the water pulled the door send a little before going back down the drain again. The creature used it's nose the open the door.

...

Thomas nearly bit on his growl when he saw what was behind the door. It looked like a snake, only mega-sized to open a door. He took notice to the horn on its forehead and when he saw the eyes, he knew it was monster that came into Charlotte's room many long nights ago. Only it was bigger, menacing, and this time...real.

GRRRRRRR...

...

The creature recognized the dog from before and had to get rid of it before he gave it away. It bared its fangs at the dog only to receive a deep grow from him.

\_"Thomas, \_ go to bed. You just ate," said a low, feminine voice.

...

Thomas quickly turned to his sleeping owner. Charlotte must have heard him growling and started to wake up. He knew she would be a goner if she even woke up at all.

So, he stopped growling until he heard her start to snooze off again. And as soon as he heard the snores, he turned his head back to the creature.

...

The creature started to come out the bathroom. It had to work fast or else the master would be angry at it. It knew that the mutt didn't want it nor the target to see each other. And it had an idea.

...

Thomas watched as the creature slithered out of the bathroom and move towards Charlotte's sleeping form. He gave the creature a low growl, but it looked at him in almost a...mocking matter.

First, it tilted its head against Charlotte's body and gave her a gentle nudge. All she did was turn her body.

If Thomas could sigh in relief, he would.

Next, it came to the side she turned to and pushed. This time, her reaction was raising her hand and pushed its snout to the side lightly. The creature gave him a look...almost a mocking look.

It thought Charlotte was playing with it, like a child playing with their food.

It kept nudging her and pushing her that she was close to waking up and he had to do something about it.

Suddenly, he noticed the end of the creature's tail and had an idea of his own.

...

The target was right in front of it. She was asleep and in peaceful form. It had to end her before it was too late.

Then, Charlotte turned her body up, with her face going upwards towards the creature. The creature opened it's mouth and got ready to strike...

But then came the most unbearable, agonizing pain came from the end of its tail and the creature's eyes widened with anger as he saw what was causing it.

The dog was biting on its tail.

...

Thomas made sure he had a firm grip on the tail. He wanted to be sure that if someone was going to die at the mercy of this creature, it was going to be him.

And by the looks of it, that just might happen.

...

With an unreadable anger, the creature rose away from Charlotte and tackled the dog head-on, practically sending both of them through the door, breaking off the hinges off.

But the moment the crash happened, the unfortunate event happened.

Charlotte's eyes popped wide open.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Charlotte's POV<strong>

You know, there are many reasons why someone would wake up in the middle of the night. And one of them, for instance, are nightmares.

So, when I woke up, I originally planned to just get up and kick Thomas out of my room. But when I saw that my bedroom door was broken off and my dog was at the mercy of the monster from my visions, I did the most logical yet illogical thing to do.

I screamed.

"AAAAAAAAAHHHHH!"

The monster looked up from Thomas and glared at me. In some way, it was still the same monster from before but only without the spikes and talons. I was willing to conclude the version of the monster was when it was in its defensive form.

The monster let out a roar that could have rivaled a T-rex and charged right at me!

I quickly fell to the side of the bed and crawled under my bed. I heard a "BANG" and realized that it must have missed me and hit the wall.

There was another roar and suddenly, the bed was lifted above my head and I barely dodged the horn on the monster's forehead. I rolled away and my bed came crashing down to the floor. I got up and made a run for my door... or what was left of it.

Suddenly, I felt something pull me down and the moment I fell, I felt something move past me and hit the wall. I looked up and saw 3 spikes embedded in the wall.

I realized that if I had kept running, those spikes would have been in me. I looked back and saw the tip of the horn on the monster's forehead grow back.

The thing shot freaking retractable spikes from its horn!

I entered the hallway and was really thankful to hear Thomas right next to me. I started running as fast as I could and I could hear the monster chasing after us, its body constantly hitting the walls from side to side.

But I wasn't looking and if it wasn't for Thomas, I would have fell down the stairs. I looked down the stairs and then looked behind me to see the monster charging at me with an intent to kill.

Then, I saw the handle bars by the stairs and realized that I had two options: face my death by a serpent or slide down the railing and most likely break my arm?

Obviously, I chose the one where I would get to live.

I hopped onto the railing and started to slide down while Thomas took the stairs. I had only a few seconds to admit that this was kind of fun, but the moment I ducked my head to avoid razor-sharp fangs from biting me, I knew I was in trouble.

I jumped off when I was halfway to the ground and landed on my two feet. I ran for the front door and started to turn the knob, but it was locked. I tried twisting and turning the lock but it was jammed.

"Com on! Come on!" I said as I tried to open the door.

Then, I felt something sharp swiftly scratch my back and soon came an unbearable pain. I put my hand my back and felt something wet. I pulled my hand back and even in the dimmest light, I could see the blood on my hand.

The bloody thing scratched me!

I slowly turned around and saw the monster glaring at me with hungry eyes. I almost looked down and saw that the monster was growing legs and sharp talons. Now it was beginning to look like the monster from my vision.

It didn't attack me, but I had a feeling that it thought it had me. My back was hurting so bad and I tried my best not to feel defenseless. I put my hands behind my back and tried to think.

I wasn't going to die tonight, but there's no way I can get past something so big. Unless...

What the heck, I have powers! I might have not wanted to be a mermaid again, but at least I can use what was useful!

While looking the monster in the eye, I slowly opened my hands towards the door knob. And I don't know how, but I could tell it was frozen.

Then, with one push of my hands, I heard a big 'CLANG!', signaling my departure.

"Bye, bye..." I said as I turned around and, as hard as I could, kicked the door open. I ran out the house and heard a big roar, and



it was telling me to get help or I was done for.

Officially.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>3rd POV<strong>

Charlotte ran across the lawn and ran down the street as fast as she could. She didn't have to turn around to see the monster gaining on her, but almost like a life support, she was thankful to hear that Thomas made it out unharmed.

WOOF! WOOF!

Charlotte turned to her side and saw her dog running alongside her, barking his head off.

WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF!

She saw what seemed to be a phone booth not far ahead and was determined to get to it.

BANG!

Charlotte almost fell as the monster was practically running beside them, forcing her and Thomas to get off the street and onto the neighbors' lawns.

The monster was no longer a serpent. It was now running on legs and and spikes were coming from all over its body.

This was definitely the monster from her visions.

She and the dog kept running and running, jumping over gnomes and flowers. The monster \_had \_to have some type of plan figured out.

It wasn't helping that Charlotte was bleeding and in intense pain or Thomas's effortless barking. But some supernatural force must have hated her for what was about to happen next.

One of her neighbor's sprinklers came on.

Oh god, the disadvantage of being a mermaid...20 seconds of physical contact with water before she sprouted a tail.

Charlotte tried to go the other way, or at least find some exit that would help keep her from going into her mermaid form while she was on the brink of death, but the monster started shooting spikes at her to keep her from entering someone's backyard and from entering the streets.

Which means that she had only one thing to do.

Charlotte heard her heart beating fast and her feet pounding into the ground as the water hit her head on.

\_20...\_

The monster roared almost in

anticipation.

\_19...\_

\_18...\_

\_17...\_

\_16...\_

\_15...\_

\_14...\_

\_13...\_

\_12...\_

\_11...\_

\_10...\_

\_9...\_

\_8...\_

\_7...\_

\_6...\_

\_5...\_

\_4...\_

\_3...\_

\_2...\_

\_1...\_

"NO!" Charlotte yelled as she slipped and fell onto the wet grass. She saw the bubbles and water encase her until it was gone and left her in her mermaid form.

The water was falling down on her like rain and Thomas knelt beside her as he tried to get her to hold onto his collar so that he could manage to pull her away. But the pain in her back increased ten times more and she couldn't move.

Whatever was in that monster's talons was something that could practically kill her in mermaid form.

Suddenly, she felt her eyes about to drop and knew that she was about to meet her end.

She watched as the monster started to change as it came running up to her. Its skin change from scaly, lizard-like skin to murky water. The talons dissolved into heaps of boiling water. Its eyes were no longer yellow but now a full-scale red.

Wait? The monster was made out of water?

Charlotte had quietly concluded that the monster must have rose from her bathtub drain and formed in her bathroom. But if it was in its true form now...

Using the last ounce of her energy, she raised her hand as the monster zeroed in on her.

She felt her eyes drop one last time at the site of the monster before she heard a shriek and someone yell...

"CHARLOTTE!"

\* \* \*

><p><strong>READ&#amp;#106;REVIEW!<strong>

## 21. Choices and New Powers

\*\*Hey guys, this is new chapter and sorry for the wait. I decided to add Riley and Alaine back into the mix. I want to thank all of you for reading my last chapter. I can't help it. I love cliff hangers!\*\*

\*\*I HIGHLY suggest that you all listen to a song called "Anything but Ordinary" by Avril Lavigne. I am constantly listening to this as it often gives me inspiration while writing this fanfic. \*\*\*\*You'll find it on YouTube!\*\*

\*\*Also: I have great news! \*\*

\*\*As you should know, when I write chapters, I do my best to make my readers feel like they're watching a tv show. So, I found the perfect guy/actor to play Riley Byrnes!\*\*

\*\*And the winner is...Bob Morley! He used to be on ''Home & Away'' and I also found out that he played on fireman on the Australian TV movie "Scorched". Turns out that he and Brittany Byrnes (aka the actor who played Charlotte Watsford) were both in the movie and played boyfriend and girlfriend!\*\*

\*\*ENJOY!\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><em><strong>Two days later: September 15th, Tuesday...<strong>\_

"Girl, are you okay? You missed school yesterday and today, you look like you've been attacked by something," Alaine said as she took note of Charlotte massaging her back and taking two pain killers. Their choir practice let out early and the two friends were sitting on the front steps of the school while everyone left.

Alaine was worried for her friend. She didn't come to school the other day and today, she looked like she was on the verge of passing out.

And Charlotte honestly didn't want to explain. She spent the entire day yesterday with Laguna, trying to heal the scar - or should she say, **\*\*scars -\*\*** that the Water Snake had left on her back.

**\*\*\_Flashback...\_\*\***

\_Charlotte woke up with a bad headache. She tried to sit up, but the moment she did, a soaring wave of pain hit her and she yelped in , she felt two cold hands press down on her back and start rubbing it.\_

\_"Take it easy Charlotte. You've had one hell of a night," she heard Laguna's voice say to her from behind. She tried to stretch out her arms and was surprised to feel water around her. She looked around and saw that she was her belly in her mermaid form, and in some pool.\_

\_She felt the hands press down on her back again and immediately cried in pain. \_

\_"Shh, I'm sorry about that. Honestly, that monster practically scarred you, and it doesn't help that you nearly died freezing it. Do you remember what happened?" Laguna said.\_

\_Charlotte raked her head to remember the past events and finally, she remembered what happened.\_

\_She almost died.\_

\_"Yeah," she said hoarsely. It was barely audible, but it felt painful to talk. Her back was stinging like crazy and she was worried if she was still bleeding.\_

\_As if she read her mind, Laguna said "Your bleeding stopped, and just in time though. I was worried that we were too late."\_

\_Charlotte turned her head slightly to get a better look at where she was.\_

\_She was in Laguna's pool.\_

\_Apparently, she was laying on , what seemed to be, one of the 3 stools that laid under water near the edge of the pool...the same place where she was talking to Karen and had the vision.\_

\_Laguna was sitting on her knees by the edge in a blue dress.\_

\_"What...happened...after..." Charlotte's voice was sore and couldn't even finish the sentence.\_

\_Laguna seemed to know what she was asking about.\_

\_"I will admit, me and Karen did sit outside your house last night. And forgive us for that, but after hearing that vision yours, it just didn't sit with me to just leave you alone like that. Even if Thomas and your mother were home.\_

\_And thank god, I was right. Both of us had a front row seat to the entire thing. I saw you and the dog run out of that house with that creature on your tail \_\*\*(no pun intended). \*\*\_W\_\_e would have gotten to you sooner but the car wasn't acting right. I nearly had a heart attack when I saw the blood running down your back. And now it leaves 3 nasty scars there," Laguna said with sourly.\_

\_"S..scars..?"\_

\_"Yes. The monster was chasing after you on 4 legs and on each of them were three, long claws. And we arrived just in time to witness you freezing the creature. Ha! Water mimicry! Marana was a dirty one for pulling a trick like that. She nearly had you killed!\_

\_Karen used her powers to turn off the sprinklers. God, you had her worried. She screamed when she saw you passed out And when I flipped you over, I saw the claw marks doing something to your skin and I knew you were poisoned.\_

\_You were bleeding so much... I practically had to use a moon ring to heal you, or at least stop the bleeding. But now, you're in recovery," Laguna concluded.\_

\_Charlotte wanted to know more about the poison and the monster that Marana set after her. Marana wouldn't kill her sister's reincarnation without a reason.\_

\_She moved her right hand and made a "continue" gesture. Laguna saw this and sighed.\_

\_"The poison was a mix of snake poison and a type of dangerous coral. And in my opinion, it's more dangerous than a rainbow coral. But that's a lesson for another day.\_

\_Anyways, this particular coral can drain the powers of any mermaid. So, as Brendan would say, in kid speak: Snake poison that can kill people and corals that can take away your powers are a toxic mix. I found a scale from the monster in Thomas's mouth. As it turns out, he bit the thing.\_

\_Oh, don't worry. He's fine. In fact, he's sleeping in Brendan's bedroom at the moment. We had to take him with us because he refused to leave your side and you needed to get here as fast as we could.

\_

\_Anyways, the scale showed that the snake's form originated from a poisonous desert snake and it had a rough skin, so it was no use trying to burn it. Luckily, Jonathan got the antidote and gave it to Karen, who mixed it in with a potion to cure the coral part of the poison. After it was done, I poured it onto the scars and you started to heal. Though you did have a mini seizure the moment the potion made contact with your skin."\_

\_"Mar...ana..." Charlotte croaked.\_

\_'Yes," Laguna sneered, rubbing Charlotte's back a little too hard, "she created that monstrosity. What in the seas was she thinking?! There\_\_'s no possible way she wanted you dead, otherwise she would be ruining her own plans. Hell! If that mermaid, if I can even call her

that, had any LOVE for her sister, then she wouldn't have gone that far!"\_

\_Now, Charlotte's back was hurting from Laguna's aggressive message.\_

\_DING!\_

\_Charlotte heard a timer go off beside her.\_

\_"Time to pour some more of the potion on. Don't worry, it'll only sting a little," Laguna said.\_

\_Charlotte felt her mentor's hands press off her back and then she heard a metallic 'CLAG!'. Then, she felt something warm fall on her hissed when she felt a sting on her back.\_

\_It wasn't as bad as before, but it still hurt. However, the pain soon met with a calming effect and she felt okay.\_

\_"Your very lucky to still be alive, Charlotte. It even surprised me that your mother is still alive as well," Laguna said she pressed her hands back on Charlotte's back.\_

\_Hearing this, Charlotte sat up immediantly...only to hiss in pain when she stretched her scars. Laguna quickly pushed her back down.\_

\_"Sorry, wrong thing to say! Your mother IS okay. I had Jonathan go to your house earlier with a toolbox in hand to fix any damages made during the attack. When he was working on your bedroom door, he noticed that your mother didn't wake up from the noise he was making. He went to her door and felt some type of invisible veil over the door. Karen went over there t\_\_o see what it was earlier.\_

\_She found out that the veil must have been put over her door to stop her from hearing the attack, or to say, keep her asleep during the whole thing. Thankfully, Karen removed it. Marana possible planned to have you killed and not be discovered until later," Laguna explained.\_

\_Charlotte sighed with relief. Both of her loved ones were safe. She didn't think she could handle it if someone died. And she was thankful that her mother was asleep. Her mother would have had a heart a heart attack if she saw the monster.\_

\_Which reminded her: she needed to give it a name. Monster and creature just can't do.\_

\_Suddenly, Charlotte felt her eyes begin to drop. Either she was falling asleep from the potion or Laguna's massage, she didn't know. But she had to make one thing clear.\_

\_"W-water...s-snake..."\_

\_She felt Laguna's eyes o her.\_

\_"What did you say, dear?" she asked.\_

"C-call...t-the...monster...a...Water...Snake..." Charlotte said before she drifted off to sleep.

**\*\*\_Flashback ends...\_\*\***

Charlotte spent the day doing some swim therapy in the pool and then tried doing therapy in her human form. She had called her mom and told her a small lie (which was nothing new nowadays) that she had left the house early to do some softball practice and would be staying at a friend's house for the night.

Laguna had given her the OK to go back to school the next day, but only if she took 2 pain killers to ease the pain in her back when it hurts. She had also given her a note that excused her from her next, real softball practice and someone would pick her up from school and take her to Paradise.

Brendan was happy when Laguna told Charlotte to leave Thomas with them for the day.

"Alaine, I'm fine. My back just hurts. That's all," she said.

Alaine scoffed. "Char, you've taken at least 10 pills today. Are you sure you're alright? Do you need to see a doctor?"

Charlotte shook her head, knew her friend was worried, but as long as she didn't see nor know about the scars, she was okay.

"Yeah, I'm fine. Don't worry, I'll be back to normal by tomorrow."

Suddenly, Alaine stood up straighter and looked at her with an excited look on her face.

"Hey, what are you doing this weekend? Got any plans?" she asked excitedly. Oh boy, she wanted something. That was truly the only time she ever got excited.

"I probably have to work or something that day," Charlotte said, only to be met with a pout on Alaine's face. Alright, she was lying about work because she would be actually training with Laguna. But Alaine didn't know that.

"Come on, I know you just started that job, but can't you say you won't be able to come in and spend the day with me and a few girls from choir and the softball team. We'll be volunteering at a green house and then we're all going to this beach called Pirate's Cove. It's a bike ride down after this reservation near the beach.

Please, pretty please, come with us! It will be so much fun! Missing one day of work wouldn't hurt! Please?" she asked with puppy dog eyes.

Unfortunately for her, Charlotte learned to resist the puppy dog eyes after spending so much time with Thomas. However, she didn't want to disappoint her because, in a way, she was her only friend and she didn't know what Alaine was like outside of school.

"Alright...I'll try to get out of it. But I can't make any promises," Charlotte said. Alaine squealed in delight and wrapped her arms

tightly around Charlotte.

"Thank you, thank you, THANK YOU!" Alaine squealed, "I promise you won't regret this!"

The hug would have been nice if she wasn't squeezing on her scars but Charlotte bared through it until she let go.

"Alright \_Al\_, " Alaine glowered at the nickname, " I have a ride coming to pick me up. Who's taking you home?"

Alaine smiled and pointed to a green bike that was sitting laying against a tree.

"I'm a 'go green' type of person. I have nothing against cars, but I prefer something simple and safe sometimes, besides the bus," Alaine said. Charlotte's eyes widened.

She's friends with a nature freak. Cool.

BEEP! BEEP!

WOOF!

The two girls looked up and saw Karen Cove waving a hand outside of her van and Thomas's head sticking out of the window.

"Well, gotta go." Charlotte hugged her friend and waved goodbye one last time before she got into the van and drove off.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Halfway down to Paradise Cove...<strong>

The car ride was silent. The radio was playing and Charlotte had her head against the window while Karen was driving.

\_Could I really miss a day of training to spend a day with Alaine?  
\_Charlotte thought, \_I mean, it couldn't hurt, but I could be missing something valuable that day.\_\_  
><em>

She sighed and Karen turned to her.

"What's got you so down?" she asked.

Wanting to avoid the topic of her possibly skipping mermaid training, Charlotte answered with a question.

"When I cry, how come I don't turn into a mermaid?"

Karen looked at her and laughed.

"Really? I thought you would have figured \_\*\*that \*\*\_out by now, especially with all the tears you've seem to shed, but to answer your question: Tears are self made. Tears, sweat, blood, saliva and anything that comes from your body won't change you or else no mermaid would be safe on land. And I can say the same thing for using the bathroom."



Charlotte smiled at that.

"Alright, so tell me what's really bothering you," she asked again. Karen practically saw right through Charlotte's attempt.

The teen mermaid groaned. "Okay, so my friend, Alaine, invited me to hang out with her and a few girls from school this weekend. Thing is, I have training that day and I can't miss anything!"

"Oh, and the fact that it just so happens to be a full moon on the same night also makes that tricky, if it's an overnight thing," Karen said, "do you want to go?"

Charlotte nodded slightly. "I would honestly like to, but they plan on going to a greenhouse and then to the beach later on."

"So, you want to hang out with your friends but you're going to two water related places. I see the problem, but you want to have a social experience, don't you?" Karen asked.

Charlotte sighed. "You'd think that after being in choir and the softball team I'd have enough of that. But I've never done anything outside of school besides going to work and training. In fact, before your family came along, my only friend was Thomas. I just guess that some free time with real, **\*\*\_normal\_\*\*** people might be nice."

Karen laughed.

"I guess your right about that. It seems nice to spend time with people who don't have to share the same worries like you do, but it's also nice to spend time with people who do. But in the end, it's all the same. We have lives, we have worries, we have insecurities, and we have lives. But just because your something else- and I use that term lightly- doesn't mean your different from everyone else. In the end, it makes you one in the same."

Charlotte smiled at that. "Thanks for the advice. I'll be sure to remember that."

And I'll write that in my journal to make sure that I do, \_Charlotte thought.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>At Paradise Cove...<strong>

When they finally got to the cafÃ©, Charlotte went to the cafÃ© staff's locker room to change into her uniform while Brendan practically stole Thomas for the Remainderday.

Once again, Charlotte looked at herself in the mirror and felt different. Maybe it was the the scars on her back-which would not be seen by anyone because of her shirt- that was making self-concious...or was the change that her mother was talking about from the previous night finally settling in on her.

Leaving the locker room, she put on her "Happy Face" and began work.

When she got to a table, she pulled out her pen and notepad and said

"Hello there and welcome to the Paradise Cove Cafe. What would you like to order?"

But, apparently, she should have looked at who she was serving.

"Thanks and I would like a date with a beautiful waitress named Charlotte. Is that on the menu?" a rather familiar voice asked.

Charlotte's eyes widened as she looked up from her notepad and saw Riley sitting in front of her, smirking at her. He was in his casual lifeguard uniform and his black eye was gone.

Still mad at him for the "twilight" comment, she gave him a fake smile and said "I'm sorry, we don't serve that nor do we serve to arrogant lifeguards."

With that, she walked away and went to serve a family at the next table.

But Riley seemed to have other ideas. He got up and started to walk beside her.

"Listen, I'm really, really, \_really \_sorry about what I said before! It was-"

"Rude, stereotypical, insulting! And then saying that I'm on some kind of team was pushing it!" Charlotte exclaimed as she turned to him. She walked away from him and started taking orders from a family at the next table.

But Riley said "Excuse us," to the family before grabbing Charlotte's arm and dragging her outside the cafe, leaving the family confused.

When they got on the beach, Charlotte grabbed her notepad and started to whack him upside the head with it repeatedly.

"How. Dare. You. Do. That!" she shouted as she continued to hit him. Riley grabbed her arm and took the notepad out of her hand.

"Really? I'm trying to apologize and you're hitting me!" He said, a little agitated. He expected her to be stubborn, but not still angry at him.

Then again, he did avoid her afterwards.

"Well, when you drag me from my job in front of \*\*costumers,\*\* that's when I get angry! Now shouldn't you be flirting with some other girl in distress?" she asked.

"Actually, I don't because I'm trying to apologize to a beautiful waitress and ask her out on a date!" Riley exclaimed. Then, he covered his mouth.

That was not planned to come out.

Charlotte just stared at him. Slowly, the anger she held for him started to fade away and eventually calmed down. Riley noticed

this.

Maybe there was hope for them after all.

"Listen, you seem like a great guy and all, but I'm not interested in dating anyone. And besides, I am completely done with guys who send me mixed signals, " she said, slightly directing that point to him, "the first time we met, you were sweet and caring. The next time we saw each other, you were rude, arrogant, and a complete jerkface! Not to mention, that you've been in all my classes and you've never acknowledged me. Never once.

So even if we were friends, it would be hard dealing with you. Not to sound harsh, but I'm speaking the truth."

Ok. Maybe not complete hope, but Riley had to try.

He raised his hands up in surrender.

"Alright, I understand. Around you, I haven't seemed like the best person and I'm sorry. I have my days where I can be moody and my days where I can be great and you honestly shouldn't have to deal with that. But I want to get to know you. Maybe asking for a date is a little too much, but can we at least be friends? I promise, I will try to act better around you. Just give me a chance, please."

By this time, he was practically begging. Charlotte looked at him in shock.

Alright, no one has ever done this before. Especially to her.

What made her so special?

"Alright, we can be friends," Charlotte said, "but only if you promise to keep your word, not only to me, but to everyone else."

Riley smiled and almost went up to hug her but realized that he would be overstepping his boundaries.

\_Cool it dude! Don't mess this up, \_he thought to himself.

So instead, he held out his hand, which Charlotte grasped firmly, and shook it

"Okay, now that that's done with, may I please have my notepad back and head back in for work before I get fired?" Charlotte asked.

\_Not that Laguna would, \_Charlotte thought.

Riley slightly fumbled while handing her the notepad. She accepted it gracefully and started to head back to the cafÃ©. But she had one thing left to be said.

Charlotte turned around one last time and said to Riley,

"I'm Team Neither."

Riley looked at her in confusion.

"What?"

Charlotte rolled her eyes playfully and said "You thought that I was on Team Edward or on Team Jacob. But I'm on Team Neither, meaning that I'm on neither side because it's pointless to go after someone who's, one way or another, managed to ruin so many people's lives for a little thing. Plus, both guys could do better and now Jacob is back to being Bella's lap dog, only this time, her daughter is holding the leash."

Riley got what she was trying to say and started to laugh. Charlotte started to laugh as well as she turned and headed towards the caf  .

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Charlotte's POV<strong>

When I walked back into the caf  , I quickly felt a pair of eyes on me. I turned around and saw Jonathan glaring at me with his black eyes. He must have seen me and Riley talking.

Suddenly, the words he said to me the day he stopped Jason and his gang from assaulting me came into my head.

"Let me make this clear: I didn't do that for you. I did that because it would have been only a matter of minutes until you remembered what you could do and expose my family. To be honest, I could care less about you being harassed by some boy you led on..."  
"

I couldn't help but feel a shiver run down my back and shudder at his words. I always thought about it.

He honestly thought I would harm the Coves. That was preposterous... yet so true.

After constantly, re-listening to Lewis's video message, I understood that I had the potential to be a dangerous threat to anyone around me. But I would never harm the Coves, especially Laguna and Karen. They've helped me so much and they really care about me.

Besides, even if I did use my powers on others, I strictly limited myself for only using them for self-defence purposes only. I would never use them to harm other people on purpose. I've already learned my lesson.

After waiting a few tables and bringing them their order, I was taking a small break when I saw Karen walking towards me with a smirk on her face.

Oh boy, what's up with her now?

"So, I see that you and Riley are well acquainted now," She said. My eyes widened.

Oh joy. Not only did Jonathan see me, but even Karen saw our little "talk".

"It was nothing really. It was just him apologizing for being an

a-butthole, " I said to refrain from cursing, "he even had the nerve to ask me out before even asking if we could be friends first! And I hope even agreeing to be friends will be enough!"

Dating was officially the last thing on my list and I didn't plan on moving it up any time soon.

Karen giggled.

"Well, since I saw the two of you laughing, I think your decision will be worth well."

She winked at me and left to go back to manning the cash register. I felt my sweat drop.

Oh great. Everyone is trying to play matchmaker with me.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>On the drive to the Cove's residence...<strong>

\*\*3rd POV\*\*

After Charlotte's shift ended, Karen and she (Brendan and Thomas would ride with Jonathan, much to his displeasure) took the van and drove to the Cove's house for Charlotte's new lesson.

Her scars had healed well and Charlotte feel the pain in her back anymore. Though, knowing Laguna, she would probably have to do more water therapy to make sure.

"So, what am I learning?" Charlotte asked Karen.

She had no problem with a history lesson- which, to be honest, she hadn't gotten a lot of- but Charlotte wanted to know more about mermaids, like the myths that are actually true.

For example, is it really a myth that mermaids have underwater kingdoms? Or, were there other types of things she could use her powers on, like acids?

Stupid, she knew, but it would be exciting to learn about it.

As if she read her mind, Karen said "Don't worry. You'll know more about your heritage soon. But for the lesson, it's a surprise."

Charlotte gave her a pouty face and they both laughed.

By the time they arrived, Charlotte practically jumped out the car while it was still moving into the driveway - Karen laughed at that - and entered the house.

When she got to the fireplace, she'll admit that she waited impatiently for Karen, but who could blame either of them. Charlotte was eager to find out what she was learning and Karen was pregnant and needed to take her time.

When Karen FINALLY arrived, she asked "How come you're not already in the cave?"

Charlotte was about to reply that she was waiting for her, but realized something.

She had no idea how to open the passage way.

Charlotte, realizing her dilemma, blushed in embarrassment.

Karen laughed and said "All you have to do is ignite a fire and make it grow all the way to the top of the glass cylinder. Then, after a few seconds, pull the flame out."

Charlotte nodded and looked at the fireplace.

She raised her hand up and closed it in the direction of the fireplace. Then, the wood ignited into flames. Next, using both hands, she raised both up to the ceiling, causing the fire to grow with it.

Soon enough, the fire was at the top of the cylinder.

Charlotte grasp her hand in thin air, like she was pulling something to her, and pulled it back.

The entire fire disappeared.

The cylinder started to go up into the ceiling and the fire place went into the ground. Then, the granite wall slid to the side, revealing the passage to the cave.

Karen clapped.

"Congratulations, Charlotte. You have now gotten access to the cave!"

Charlotte smiled as she walked through the cave entrance with Karen right behind her.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>In the cavepool...\*\*

When Charlotte arrived at the pool, she was surprised to see that no one was there.

"Laguna? Laguna, where are you?" she called as she looked around the pool.

There was no response.

Charlotte looked around the sitting area to see if her mentor may have hidden behind the chairs. But she wasn't there.

"Alright. This is a funny prank, I'll admit. I honestly didn't think you had this kind of sense of humor, but this is good," she said.

Still no response.

She was about to leave the pool and walk out of the cave, when, all

the sudden, her vision faded. She nearly stumbled and fell due to the loss sight. But when it came back, it was slightly off.

Everything seemed to look like she was looking through a magnify glass. She looked round and saw a slender, human-sized bubble standing by the pool.

Charlotte walked towards the bubble and something occurred to her.

Only one person should be in this room beside her and Karen, who also just so happened to be missing as well.

"Laguna...is that you?" she asked.

Suddenly, her vision went back to normal and, to her not-so-much astonishment, Laguna appeared in front of her.

Though she wasn't surprised, Laguna was.

How could Charlotte have known it was her, let alone, seen her?

Deciding to ask her about that later, Laguna put on a smile and said "Hello Charlotte. In case you missed it, which I find highly impossible, you just saw one of the powers for of a natural mermaid."

"Wait a minute! You can turn invisible?" Charlotte asked. She didn't know what happened to her vision that allowed her to see Laguna, but she was going to have to work on it.

Laguna nodded. "Yes, usually, natural-born mermaids get extra powers, along with their original ones. And as you saw, one of them is invisibility."

Then, Karen appeared beside Charlotte, only this time, she managed to scare the heck out of her.

"Sorry! Didn't mean to scare you, that was supposed to be my mother's job," Karen said, earning a look from Laguna, "but that's beside the point. You see, for Today, or rather this evening's lesson, we'll be teaching you the powers of natural-born mermaids. But first...History lesson!"

The few minutes, Charlotte and the two woman sat around the sitting as shelistened to how mermaids had used these powers to escape predators and fishermen. They used invisibility to escape and not be seen their enemies and land dwellers, and sometimes play pranks on each other. The power to counter this ability was Invisibility Detection, the ability to detect other invisible mermaids.

Laguna believed that Charlotte had that. There's no other explanation to how she could have seen her.

"So, try it'" Laguna said to Charlotte, "it will be good practice. Just cross your hand over your chest."

Charlotte nodded. She made her hand into a fist and pulled it into her chest. She didn't feel different. But when she looked at her

other hand, she couldn't see it. So when she dropped the hand that was on her chest, she saw her other hand became visible.

She had just turned herself invisible.

Cool.

"Alright, one power down, one more to go," Karen muttered.

The other power was telekinesis, much to Charlotte's surprise.

"This power took centuries for natural-born mermaids to fully master before any mermaid could do it. Telekinesis, which is most often mistaken for levitation, " Laguna said, "takes concentration, visualization, and sometimes silence to master. When it is, this could become as easy to use, practically as easy as using your powers on a daily bases."

"It takes a great deal of practice and concentration. For example, watch me, " Karen said.

She placed glass of water on the table and stared at the glass.

Charlotte watched in amazement as 3 small balls of water rose out of the glass and began to move in a ring-like circle. Karen wasn't doing any hand gestures or anything. She was doing the whole thing with her mind.

"Wow..." Charlotte said as Karen put the water back into the cup, "that's amazing!"

Laguna agreed. "Yes, it is. But like what we said, it takes a great deal of practice and concentration."

"So, can I try it?" Charlotte asked. Laguna looked skeptical about this, but nodded.

Charlotte looked at the glass and closed her eyes.

She started to think about water, it rising out of the glass in a ball, and it circling itself around the glass in a juggling matter.

Charlotte peaked with one eye and both of her eyes widened when she saw a small ball of water juggling itself around the glass.

But unfortunately, due to her loss of concentration, the ball fell on the table with a small 'SPLAT'.

"Oops..." Charlotte said.

Laguna made a hand gesture that caused the small puddled to rise off the table and back into the glass.

"Don't worry, practice makes perfect. But that was a really good try for your first time," Laguna said, "so you see, there's more to being a mermaid than sprouting a tail and having powers. One thing for sure is that you have to actually learn something. The other is that you can expand your abilities."



Charlotte nodded and realized that she had something to ask.

"Is there more abilities to having visions? I mean, I have the gift to see vision and all, so is it possible to do more than that?" she asked.

Laguna looked at her sadly. This was a topic she did NOT want to teach the girl.

"Charlotte, though I'm NOT going to tell you how old I am, I can tell you that \_that \_gift is a mixed blessing. You know how you reacted when you had the vision of the Water Snake. That is just one of the many examples of how this gift can harm you physically and mentally.

Trust me, for as long as I had it, I did learn that there was more to it than just seeing certain things. And if I were to teach you that, there would be a chance that I would be putting you at risk," Laguna explained.

Charlotte put her head down a little in shame.

"So, is that a no?" she asked.

Laguna looked at her in pity.

"I'm sorry my dear, but I'm afraid so."

\* \* \*

><p><strong>At Charlotte's house...<strong>

When Charlotte and Thomas ( he arrived at the Coves in the middle of Charlotte's lesson) got dropped off at home, Charlotte was relieved to see that the house was dark-signaling that Annette was in bed already.

Charlotte used her key to get both of them in. After that, she made him a bowl of food, took a bath- part of her may never get over her tail- and got ready for bed.

After putting on her night gown, she let Thomas into her room and plopped herself onto her bed.

Alright, so Charlotte learned two things tonight.

1. Like natural-born mermaids, land-transformed mermaids can aquire the ability of Telekinesis and Invisibility.

2. Laguna refuses to teach her how to control and manipulate her visions.

It's not like Charlotte doesn't know pain. She's been through it physically and mentally for months and she could care less.

Was it that Laguna didn't trust her?

No, Laguna wouldn't judge her lika that. If she had known Charlotte last year, of course.

But she had her memories and yet agreed to train her.

So what's the matter?

Charlotte shook her head. She already had enough to deal with.

She still owed Alaine the proper reply to if she was going with her this weekend. And don't get her started on Riley!

Sighing in frustration, she pulled the covers over her and turned off the lights. Thomas took the decency to jump onto the bed and lay next to her feet.

With one huff, she closed her eyes and went to sleep.

Only, she didn't stay there.

\* \* \*

><p><em>She couldn't <em>\_help but think she should have known she was going to have a vision.\_

\_ What else would take her someplace other but Dreamland?\_

\_Like the last vision, it was all black everywhere. There was nothing but darkness and silence at first.\_

\_Then, like a vacuum, everything started to spin around and around until it stopped and Charlotte heard waves crashing.\_

\_She was now in a different place.\_

\_The scenery took place around night-time, she noticed. The sky was black and full of stars. She turned around and saw that she was at the beach, but it was a different beach, not Paradise Cove.\_

\_There were cliffs that surrounded the top part of the beach in an oval-like shape. There were large rocks on both sides of the beach, making anyone who came here have to walk a few feet into the water to get there.\_

\_The beach was practically a secluded area.\_

\_Suddenly, she heard someone snoring. She looked around the sands and saw a few girls sleeping on the ground in sleeping bags.\_

\_As Charlotte walked towards them, she recognized most of them. They were the girls from choir and teammates from the softball team.\_

\_Where the hell was she?\_

\_"Grrr..."\_

\_Charlotte, recognizing that growl anywhere, turned around to see Thomas right behind her.\_

\_"Thomas...what are you doing here?" She asked. He just whined and and started walking along the bottom of the cliffs.\_

\_Charlotte walked away from the sleeping girls and followed him.\_

\_He sniffed around the rocks, moving any pebbles and sand in the way.\_

\_"Thomas, what are you looking for?" Charlotte asked curiously.\_

\_She got her answer when he stopped and halted at the center of the cliffs.\_

\_Charlotte honestly didn't know what he was doing. One minute, he searching for gold. The next, he stops like something's wrong.\_

\_Then, Charlotte looked up at the sky and felt a strong pull inside her.\_

\_It was a full moon.\_

\_It gave off a bright glow, so bright that you would seem to think it was lighting up the beach on purpose.\_

\_WOOF!\_

\_Charlotte looked at where Thomas was barking at and gasped.\_

\_The light shined on the cliffs to the place where Thomas stopped.\_

\_The glow started to form a oval-shaped entrance as the light got brighter. In fact, it started to glow blue.\_

\_Suddenly, the glow was gone and there was a tunnel in its place.\_

\_Thomas made no hesitation and ran in.\_

\_"Thomas STOP!" She yelled, running into the tunnel.\_

\_The rocky walls seemed to have been there for years. As Charlotte walked through the tunnel, she couldn't help but feel like this was so familiar.\_

\_It felt like she had walked forever until she heard Thomas bark.\_

\_WOOF!\_

\_She ran to the end of the tunnel and, though she was glad to have found him, what she saw amazed her.\_

\_At the end of the tunnel was a huge cave. And it was HUGE! The walls were formed in a big, circular shape and in them were hundreds- no thousands of sparkling blue crystals embedded in them.\_

\_The cave ceiling was exposed to the night sky. It was in a circular shape, possibly a few hundred feet wide. It resembled the top of a

cave beach.\_

\_Wait? If that's the top, then...Charlotte's eyes grew as she looked at the bottom.\_

\_There was a giant, crystal blue pool right in front of her. Very big and possibly very deep. \_

\_No, it was practically the size of the Great Lake, but deep down, she knew it was a pool.\_

\_Suddenly, there was a bright, blue glow and she looked up to see the moon hovering over the pool. The pool started to glow and a big, and she means BIG, amount of bubbles and rise up to the sky.\_

\_Wait a minute! She knew those bubbles anywhere.\_

\_Those were the same bubbles that turned her into a mermaid in Australia.\_

\_Her eyes widened in shock.\_

\_Holy hell, she was looking at what was possibly the world's largest moon pool in existence!\_

\*\*\_Charlotte...\_\*\*

\_Charlotte froze.\_

\_It might have been a while, but she knew that voice anywhere.\_

\_Marana.\_

\_"Who are you? No, scratch that. What do you want?" Charlotte yelled.\_

\_For a while, there was no reply.\_

\_For a moment, Charlotte thought she was safe until she heard haunting words.\_

\_\*\*Welcome home, Charlotte...\*\*  
><em>

\* \* \*

><p>Charlotte's eyes popped open as she stood straight up in her bed, causing Thomas to raise his head up in alarm.<p>

Charlotte felt herself sweating and she started to breathe heavy. She wrapped her arms around herself.

What did she just witness?

Obviously, it was a vision. But it didn't leave her anything. Another thing she would have to learn by Karen or by herself: the scale of her visions.

Why would Marana tell Charlotte to be welcomed home?

And most importantly, why the hell were her classmates there?

Charlotte thought about this for a moment and suddenly, her eyes widened.

No. Way.

Charlotte grabbed her phone and quickly started to dial the number she was looking for.

Of course, it made complete sense now!

As she put the phone to her ear and heard the phone ringing, someone picked up at the other end.

"Hello...?"

Obviously, she had been asleep.

"Hey Alaine. It's Charlotte. Where and what time will the girls be meeting up this weekend?"

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Alright. This is the end and I hope you enjoyed it.<strong>

\*\*I hope you all have your happy dances ready because the new trailer for Mako Mermaids Season 2 just came out! And guess what? Evie is indeed a mermaid!\*\*

\*\*YAAAAAYYYY!\*\*

\*\*By the way, if you want to know what the characters look like, go to my profile.\*\*

\*\*Also, from reader to author, what do you want to happen next?\*\*

\*\*Read and Review!\*\*

## 22. My Surprising Day with Alaine Part 1

\*\*Hey guys. Thanks for the feedback and your awesome support in my story.\*\*

\*\*If you guys want to see what each of the characters look like in the story, go to my profile and look under Rewind to a New Beginning, and look under Characters.\*\*

\*\*Also, please let me know what other things you want Charlotte to learn in her mermaid training?\*\*

\*\*ENJOY!\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Charlotte's house, Saturday 19th,  
2009...<strong>

\*\*10:30 am...\*\*

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BE-

SMACK!

Charlotte woke up early that morning. After setting her alarm the previous night, she woke up ready for the day.

She went to the bathroom- took a bath, washed her hair, body, and tail- evaporated the water from the tub and her tail, did her morning ritual (minus the face wash) and went back to her bedroom.

In her closet, Charlotte picked out and put on a pair of red, khaki shorts, a yellow, short-sleeve shirt, and a pair of boots. It may have not been the weather for boots, but if she was going near the beach and wanted to avoid touching the water, than it was necessary. Afterwards, she put her hair in a messy braid and noticed her guitar in the corner of her room.

She didn't know why she wanted to bring the instrument, but she couldn't shake off the feeling that she should. So, she put the guitar in the case and carried it with her as she went downstairs.

When she got downstairs, she found Thomas and her mother in the dining room. Thomas was eating scraps for breakfast and her mom had finished the last of the pancakes she was making.

"Morning sweetie. You hungry?" Annette asked, addressing the platter of pancakes she placed on the counter before taking a few off. Charlotte got a good look at the breakfast and felt her mouth start to water. Immediately, she grabbed a plate and took at least 6 pancakes off the platter.

Turns out, having a tail can make anyone work up an appetite.

As she sat down at the table and started to eat - no, devour - her breakfast, Annette watched her with an amused look on her face.

"In all my years of knowing you, I have never seen you eat that much," Annette said.

Charlotte was on her 3rd by then and took a quick bite before answering.

"Sorry, but I'm hanging out with a few friends and I doubt I'll get anything to eat until later," Charlotte said.

"Really? What are you doing?"

Charlotte shrugged. "Well-

RRRRRIIIINNNNGGGG!

Charlotte stopped what she was about to say and pulled out her cellphone to see who it is.

**\*\*Caller ID: Alaine W.\*\***

Charlotte answered the phone and put it to her ear.

"Hey Alaine. How's your morning?" she asked.

**\*\*"Uh...not well. Listen, can I come over to your house right quick? I, uh, had an incident at my house and all. So can I?"\*\*** Alaine asked.

Alaine had seen where Charlotte lived a bunch of times due to the two of them riding the bus together, so directions wouldn't be needed.

"Sure," Charlotte said, "what time?"

DING DONG!

Annette got up from her seat and went to answer the front door.

**\*\*"I'll be there in about ..."\*\***

Annette opened the door to see a young black girl with half curly and half madusa-like hair, crusty eyes, a half washed face, and a bunch of clothes with hair irons in hand. She had a phone to her ear.

SWOOSH!

Before Annette could say a word, the girl instantly ran into the house and into the nearest bathroom, almost knocking Annette down in the process.

**\*\*"...about now," \*\***Alaine said, then hanged up.

Hearing the bathroom door slamming, Charlotte rolled her eyes.

The girl was practically halfway there when she called.

After getting herself together and closing the door, Annette came back into the dinning room with a confused look on her face.

"Was that Alaine?" she asked. Charlotte nodded.

"Yeah...she's special! She, Thomas, and I were going to met the other girls that we planned to meet at the mall and after that, go to a greenhouse and the beach next. I wonder what happened at her place to cause her to come over so soon?" Charlotte asked.

"Well, when I saw her, she looked like she spent the night in a tree. Honestly, how old is she?" Annette asked.

"15 or 16 years old," Charlotte estimated.

Annette's eyes widened with surprise. A girl of that age hanging out with her nearly 18-year-old daughter was hardly heard of, especially when Charlotte had to go to college the next year.

A few minutes later, Alaine came into the dinning room looking proper this time.

Her hair was now tamed and curled up in braids, her face was now cleaned, rejuvenated, and her teeth looked pearl white. She was wearing a jean jacket, a lime green shirt under it, a long, white skirt, and some sneakers.

She turned to Charlotte.

"Sorry to rush in like that. I was having a bad day and... well you don't want to know!" she said with her energetic self. Then, she turned to Annette and held her hand, which Annette shook firmly.

"Good morning. My name is Alaine Williams. I'm the co-captain of the softball team and I play the sport with Charlotte along with singing the choir together," Alaine said, "also, I would like to apologize for barging into your home like that and I promise that the next time I visit, it won't happen again."

Charlotte used her hand to cover her mouth to stop the laughter that was trying to exit itself out of her.

Alaine planned this.

She had to. The arrival seems, not only perfectly timed, but the apology was \_way \_too rehearsed.\_  
><em>

And that it took only a matter of minutes for her to get dressed, knowing her, she was probably halfway dressed by the time she called.

But apparently Annette didn't catch it and smiled at Alaine. Clearly her earlier judgment had left her system.

"Oh, so your one of Charlotte's little friends from school. Well, you can call me Annette if you'd like. is too formal and I'm not married anyways," Annette said, "so would you like something to eat. The pancakes are still warm."

Alaine nodded and went to grab a plate. She then sat next to Charlotte with a smile on her face.

RING! RING! RING! RING!

Annette's head perked up as she realized that it was her phone that was ringing. She excused herself from the two teens and left the room.

When they were sure she was out of hearing distance, both girls started laughing up a storm.

"D-did y-you h-h-have to p-plan that w-whole thing o-out? That was s-so p-practiced!" Charlotte cracked up between laughs. She was laughing so hard that her sides hurt.

Alaine was laughing hard too, but she somehow managed to nod her head. After a few minutes, the laughter died down and the two were



now breathing heavily.

After gasping for a breath, Alaine said "Sorry if I had to fool your mom. But I wanted to:

1. Make an entrance.

and 2. Got to give you some good news and some bad news.

The bad news: We can't go to the greenhouse. Apparently, Miranda, you know, the girl from choir? Well, she was the one who told us about the place at all. But she forgot to tell us the place closed down and moved. So, change of plans."

Charlotte was filled with relief on the inside. She now didn't have to worry about the girls getting too playful and accidentally spray water on her.

"The good news," Alaine continued, "is that instead of just meeting at the mall, we all decided to spend out 'greenhouse time' there instead."

Charlotte groaned inwardly. She rarely liked shopping at all. So, no doubt she'll **\*\*\_have\_\*\***to get something now.

"Really? Do we have to spend the entire time there?" Charlotte whined. She rarely did that.

Alaine looked at her in surprise.

"What? You don't like shopping?" she asked.

Charlotte nodded. Alaine pondered on this for a second and then came up with a solution.

"How about this: You can come with us and do a little window shopping, try on a few things, and maybe if you change your mind, you can buy a few things. Does that sound like a good compromise?" Alaine asked.

Charlotte thought about this and figured it would be a good idea. She would only look around and, possibly by Alaine's persuasion, try on a few things, but not buy anything except for if she got hungry.

"Alright. Sounds like a plan, but do you mind if I bring Thomas and my guitar with me? Thomas will follow me around regardless, one way or another. As for the guitar, well...I just want to," she said.

Alaine nodded and couldn't stop herself from smiling. Now it was time to spill her surprise.

"Well, since I heard you mention the beach, I have good news for you," Alaine said, giving her best smile.

Oh boy, what was she on to? \_Charlotte thought.

"Really? What is it?" Charlotte asked as she grabbed a glass of orange juice and started to drink from it.

Surprise.

"We're staying overnight at the beach! SLUMBER BEACH PARTYYYYYYYYY!"  
Alaine sung in excitement.

In response, Charlotte accidentally did a spit tank with the orange juice she was drinking...and all went all over Alaine's face unfortunately.

"WHAT?!"

\* \* \*

><p>As disgusting as it was, Charlotte was thankful that Alaine forgave her for her "accident". Alaine, now in one of Charlotte's shirts, also apologized for springing the news on her like that.<p>

Now, Charlotte had to pack a bag filled with extra clothes, a bottle of sunscreen, a flash light, a beach towel, her journal, a flashlight, a canteen filled with lemonade, some snacks, her wallet, her cell phone, and a bag of dog food for Thomas.

After putting on the bag, grabbing her guitar case, and putting Thomas's leash on, the two girls went outside.

It surprised Charlotte to see not one - but \*\*two \*\*bikes in the driveway. The green one was obviously Alaine's, but there was a red one as well and they both had baskets on the back of them.

Charlotte's eyes widened when she spotted two sleeping bags in Alaine's basket.

"Really? You were \*\*that \*\*prepared that you brought an extra sleeping bag with you? I have no problem sleeping on a beach towel you know," Charlotte said with an eyebrow raised.

Alaine nodded. "If you thought I was going to let you get away with that, then you are VERY mistaken!"

Charlotte sighed in disbelief. She was really starting to hate surprises.

Charlotte placed her guitar case and her bag in the basket and tied Thomas to the front of the bike.

"So, if you don't mind me asking: Do you know how to ride a bike?" Alaine asked.

Charlotte looked at her and shrugged.

"It's been a while, but I still do. So, you ready?"

Alaine smiled. "Ready."

After putting on their helmets and pads (another courtesy of Alaine), both girls hopped on the bikes and rode off.

\* \* \*

><p><em><strong>Meanwhile...<strong>\_

**\*\*At the Cove residence...underground pool/cave...\*\***

Laguna was pacing back and forth in the cave as she and Karen were waiting for Charlotte. She was pulling her hair then straightening it, rubbing her hands down her dress in a nervous matter, and if you looked closely, you could tell that her eyes were twitching slightly.

To Karen, she looked like a half-decent Medusa.

In fact, Charlotte should have been there an hour ago and still hadn't shown up. This had Laguna worried deeply.

At the moment, Karen was sitting in the cave with Laguna. She was sitting in the sitting area, rubbing her stomach, while Laguna was pacing back and forth.

"This isn't normal Karen! She should have been here an hour ago! What's taking so long?" Laguna said, "What if she's being controlled by Marana, or worse, she's dead and it could be only a matter of hours until she's found!?"

Karen, who had a good idea what really happened to the girl, smiled to herself and asked "What if she's just out with a few friends?"

Laguna looked at her and scoffed.

"She doesn't have time for friends! She should be here, training, not gallivanting around!"

Then, taking a breath, Laguna explained.

"You of all people should know that Charlotte is capable of doing anything disastrous. If Marana catches her off guard and controls her, she will make her do whatever she wants. And, trust me, dear, I've been searching the books to at least find ...\_something that\_ could at least numb the effects of Marana possessing her!"

"Well, maybe you should start looking through the books Zellie gave you. I mean, this you and this family maybe mostly centered around merpeople, but there are more than we know. Perhaps, you should look in on it."

Laguna dismissed that idea. She may be an immortal mermaid, but that didn't mean that she was going to use magic from another supernatural being! That was like playing with a dangerous toy made for something else that was more dangerous!

Laguna looked at her daughter and then noticed something was off. Karen wasn't usually this quiet, but then she looked at her hands and gasped.

Karen was playing with her thumbs.

To an ordinary land dweller, this was nothing but a false habit when

they are bored. But in the Mermaidian family, that was a sign for when someone had a secret.

And apparently, Karen was keeping one.

"What do you know?" Laguna asked Karen suspiciously. Karen looked at her.

"What do you mean, Mother? I don't know anything," she said.

Laguna gave her a pointed look.

"Then why are you playing with your thumbs?"

Karen quickly looked down at her hands and stopped.

"I don't know. I'm just waiting for Charlotte, just like you," she said.

Suddenly, Laguna turned to the pool and raised her hand up. A pillar of water rose from the pull and expanded as she moved the water over to Karen.

"What are you doing?" Karen asked as she started to panic. She knew EXACTLY what was about to happen.

Before she could get out the chair, Laguna made the water to make some type of cocoon around Karen. And with a straight palm, Laguna froze the water, causing the water to solid into ice and freeze Karen's whole body to the chair, except for her head and neck.

"MOTHER!" Karen screeched. She hated this punishment for years and the fact that Laguna did this to her while she is pregnant was flabbergasted.

"A hundred years and I still got it. Now listen Karen, and listen good. You are going to tell me where Charlotte is or so help me, I will have Jonathan come and put you in the pool and we all could wait hours for the ice to thaw.

Now what will it be?" Laguna asked menacingly.

Karen gulped. Her mother was NOT crazy and this used to happen when someone in the family lies to her. Karen called this the Ice Cocoon, an original punishment made for this family. She knew her mother didn't mean harm to her grandchild, but this was something Karen knew she had to do.

"Then get him," Karen simply said.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Charlotte's POV<strong>

To be honest, I only rode a bike two times in my life.

The first time was when I was a little girl, before my dad and my grandmother died.

The second time was for a fundraiser my mom did in Atlanta. She had managed to gather a bunch of people to ride around the city on their bikes to raise money for breast cancer or something. I had volunteered and rode with her. By the end of the day, me and her legs were stiff and their feet were hurting. But it was worth it.

But the ride to the mall was actually nice, even after we managed to get out of my neighborhood. The sun was shining as I felt the wind blowing through my face, the birds chirping, the sound of the cars passing by. Thomas stopped running the same time I had to hit the brakes.

Smart dog.

But the time was nearly 11:10 am, so of course me, Alaine, and Thomas had to stick by the sidewalks and bike paths

I think it took us 10 minutes or so until we got to the mall. When we got to the entrance, we got off our bikes and parked them in the bicycle stand.

"Hey look! The others are here!" Alaine said as she pointed to a bunch of multi-colored bikes that were parked ahead of us.

The other girls were probably inside waiting for us.

I untied Tomas's leash from the front of the bike and tied him to the metal bar. I made sure to make his leash longer if someone tried to steal our bikes.

"Be good okay and don't do anything that's going to get you taken away, besides guarding our bikes. Okay?" Charlotte said to him.

WOOF!

"No, you can't go chasing other dogs while you're at it. Not even attractive, female ones."

Thomas let out something between a low growl and a whine.

I rolled my eyes. Then, I heard Alaine laughing from behind me. I turned around and gave her a look.

"What? I just so happen to find it \_highly \_amusing that you and Thomas can actually hold a conversation," Alaine said while smiling and wriggling her eyebrows.

Charlotte snorted. "Shut up."

Alaine laughed.

After making sure that Thomas was safely secured, I got up and linked arms with Alaine as we walked into the mall.

But I couldn't shake the feeling that I was being watched.

Though the mall was crowded and busy today, it didn't take long for us to find our group. We found them at the center of the mall, sitting on the benches as they were talking among themselves.

By the looks of it, at least 8 girls, plus me and Alaine, came. I saw Dominique Kane, who thankfully forgave me for the accident in tryout, Samantha Rhodes, a pretty girl with sunny-blond hair and a nice smile, and a bunch of other girls I knew from Choir and the softball team.

However, I was surprised to see a guy talking to Dominique. He wasn't as tan as her, but they looked alike. Probably her brother maybe?

Alaine made our presence known. Rather loudly.

"WE'RE HERE! Alaine yelled in a sing-song tone. It hurt my ears by how loud she was. We unlinked our arms as we got swarmed by the group.

"It's about time you got here!"

"You almost had us worried there."

"I see you brought Charlotte along," someone said dryly.

This got my attention. I looked to who said it, a girl named Ria, then to Alaine, who just looked sheepish. The group went silent.

I raised an eyebrow at her.

"Alaine, what does she mean by hat?" I asked her.

I saw her fumbling with her fingers while she started to ramble with her words.

Well, it's actually a long story, you see. Today. there were supposed to be more girls and you know how...\_picky\_ girls can be about other girls and all. And then, you remember Willow and Tessa, right? Well, they wanted to come and I was trying to be nice about it and told them who was coming and...and..." Alaine started to tail off and Dominique took the pleasure of explaining.

"In other words, Charlotte, Willow and Tessa were **\*\*\_pissed \_\*\***off that Alaine invited you and practically **\*\*demanded \_\*\***that you couldn't come. There was on overall HUGE fight which led to Alaine deciding to, if anyone didn't want you with us, they couldn't come at all. And it didn't help that most of the girls that Alaine **\*\*did \_\*\***invite were also loyal minions to Will and Tess, so they **\*\*had \_\*\***to not come.

And as you can see, Alaine clearly chose you. And don't worry about Ria. Her sister wanted to come but since she was one of the girls that didn't want you to come, she had to stay at home," Dominique said, "besides, the rest of us are actually happy to see you."

My eyes widened. I had a feeling that Alaine's ex-friends would start trouble, but the fact they would do something like that shocked me.

"Yeah, besides the girls that didn't come would have annoyed my sister to death, and that's Alaine's job!" someone said as they squeezed from behind Dominique. It was the guy she was talking to

earlier.

He was wearing a casual t-shirt and jeans, but I saw that he was wearing dress shoes instead of sneakers. Interesting fashion choice.

"Damon. Damon Kane. I'm Minnie's older brother," he said, extending his hand to me. I shook it.

"Charlotte Watsford," I said, "it's a pleasure to meet you."

He winked at me and I smiled, but I didn't blush. You can thank Riley for that.

"Well it's not for us," two voices said from behind me. I turned around and saw that it was Dominique and Alaine. And they looked irritated.

Dominique came up first.

"First of all, don't call me Minnie," she said. Then, she jerked Damon back by pulling the back of his collar and pulled him down so that his head was near her mouth as she as she whispered something into his ear.

I noticed that he lost a bit of his coloring.

"Don't worry about him," Dominique said as she let her brother go, "he's only going to follow us around since my mom's scared that I'm going to get kidnapped. As for my brother's flirting, ignore it. He always go for ones that are out of his \*\*virgin \*\*league."

This resulted in Damon grabbing her head and putting it under his arm as he ruffled her head. She screamed at him to get off.

"Ignore them, they love to flaunt their 'affection' for each other," Alaine said to me. Then, she turned to the girls.

"So, you girls ready to have some fun?"

There was a loud cheer from them and Dominique, who managed to get out of her brother's grasp and muttered something about "stinking armpits".

I smiled. Maybe this day will work out after all.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>3rd POV<strong>

The first shop was actually a store for swimwear.

\*\*\_H2O swimwear and Company.\_\*\*

They sold everything from men's and women's swimsuits and swim-trunks. They also sold swimming gear, floats, and other stuff. You name it, they had it!

Why oh why did the girls choose to come to this type of store first, Charlotte didn't know.

As they walked into the store, Charlotte asked Alaine "Why are we going here"

Alaine smiled and said "Well, since we're all going to the beach, we all wants to get extra stuff to dress for the part."

"So, some of the girls didn't bring swimsuits?"

Alaine looked at her, deadpanned.

"Yep, unfortunately."

The inside of the store was ocean themed. The walls were white with sea-blue waves. The floor, the shelves, and the tables were covered in white sand, sea shells, and other beach-like things. The shelves were white with blue pebbles and there was a big display table was in the center of the store with a bunch of neatly stacked jewelry boxes with equatic - themed pendants in them.

Charlotte noticed Alaine and two other girls go to the table and followed them.

Alaine picked up a jewelry box with a dolphin pendant in it and showed it to her.

"Oooh, I like this one! Dolphins are \*\*so \*\*cute and playful! I wonder what wild dolphins are like for real? Don't you think?" Alaine asked, then she saw the look on her friend's face, "Char?"

Charlotte tensed as she remembered what happened in Australia.

\_\*\*Flashback...\*\*\_

\_She had wanted to face her fear of dolphins, so she had went to the water park and went into the dolphin enclosure alone. She had tried playing with the Ronnie the dolphin, but he splashed water on her, which resulted in her having to jump into the water with him to avoid being seen in her mermaid form at the time.\_

\_That wasn't her best idea.\_

\_Charlotte will admit that she started to freak out and accidentally used her heat powers on Ronnie.\_

\_Thankfully, Lewis and Cleo got her out of the water and Ronnie wasn't harmed...badly. But, unfortunately, her pride got the best of her and she ended up yelling at Cleo, telling her that she didn't need her help.\_

\_Charlotte had left that experience TERRIFIED of dolphins ever since.\_

\*\*\_Flashback ends...\_\*\*

"CHARLOTTE!"

Charlotte snapped back into reality and saw Alaine looking at her with a worried look.



"Girl, are you okay?" she asked, "you look like you had just seen a ghost or something."

Charlotte shrugged off her horrific memory and put on a fake smile.

"I'm fine. I think wild dolphins are playful, but you probably won't know any time soon."

Charlotte looked away from Alaine and started looking at other pendants.

Alaine looked at her in suspicion.

As Charlotte looked around the table, she spotted something in the far back. She reached for it and pulled it out.

In her hand was 2 pendants. The first was a silver starfish and the second was a silver fish-hook.

The two instantly reminded her of Karen and Laguna. Karen was like a starfish, big and had a nice form while doing her job quietly. The fish-hook was a little joke for Laguna.

"I think I'll buy these two. They're for my bosses," Charlotte said.

Alaine looked at the pendants and raised her eyebrows.

"Really? You think buying jewelry for them is going to get you a raise? Let me guess: the starfish shows that she's a prima donna and the fish-hook shows that she's a pain in the ass?"

Despite that she was talking about her mermaid teachers, Charlotte chuckled.

"Trust, my boss isn't so bad. A pain in the ass, no. Stubborn, yes. And the starfish is for her daughter. She works at the café as a cashier and she's having a baby. I'm hoping they'll accept these as an apology for me skipping work today," Charlotte lied.

Well, it was a half lie. While she told Alaine she would have had to work today, Charlotte was really missing her mermaid lesson.

But Alaine seemed to buy it.

"Alright, but it's still bribing," she said. Then, Alaine's eyes widened at the women's swimsuits.

"Come on, I'll bet you'll find something over there!" she exclaimed.

"Alaine, I already told you. I'm not shopping. This, " Charlotte gestured to the pendants, "is a one-time thing."

With that, Charlotte walked away and went to the cashier.

It was an older woman with brown hair and green eyes.

"Excuse me, but I would like to buy these two pendants," Charlotte said as she placed the jewelry on the counter.

The woman smiled at her. "Well, it's your lucky day. We have a special."

The cashier scanned the pendants and put them in a bag.

"That'll be \$3.62. Is that all?"

Charlotte shook her head as she pulled out her wallet and took out \$4. She gave it to the woman and received her receipt, along with the pendants, in the store bag.

"Have a nice day."

"You too," Charlotte said.

As she turned around, she saw Alaine coming towards her with a smirk on her face.

What Charlotte saw in her hand horrified her.

"No no no no no no no no no...NO!" Charlotte exclaimed.

\* \* \*

><p>"I can't believe your making me do this!" Charlotte exclaimed from the inside of the dressing room.<p>

On the outside, Alaine and the other girls were waiting for Charlotte to show off her swimsuit.

"Oh, stop being such a drama queen! I'm sure you have a nice figure," Alaine said, "and besides, it's not like you're wearing a bikini. Oh no, those are not your style!"

"Yeah, come out already," Dominique said.

Hearing a huff, Alaine couldn't help but raise her camera phone up as Charlotte came out of the dressing room.

Charlotte was in a lime-green swimsuit with a large chunk taken out of the side. The suit fit her curves nicely, but her exposed chest made her uncomfortable.

"Well?" Charlotte asked as she tried to cover herself.

The first person to speak was Damon.

"Wow! You look hot!" he said. This caused Charlotte to hide her face and his sister to slap him on the back of his head.

"Dude, that's enough! Stop hitting on her!" Dominique said, then she turned to Charlotte, "I think you look great."

Alaine snapped a picture and said "Great! Now I can say that you are absolutely sexy in a shark-bite swimsuit!"

By now, Charlotte had to be as red as a tomato.

"Alright, alright, I get it. I'm good looking in a suit that's not my style! Now, can I please take this off? I feel so...naked," Charlotte said as a shiver went down her back.

"Alright, but Alaine will send us the pictures," Samantha said, causing Charlotte to groan as she went back into the dressing room to change.

After leaving H2O, everyone went to other stores like Victoria Secrets(Damon wasn't allowed in there), Claire's Boutique, Avalon, and a few other stores.

Charlotte was, for the first time in a while, truly happy. She never really had friends and even if she tried, it always backfired. But to actually be socializing, goofing off, having fun with people who actually like her was like leaving Amish land to live like a regular person. It was relieving.

Alaine always tried to include her in everything and somehow managed to get her to try on more than one outfit in every store they entered. Damon made sure to make flirty comments on whatever she wore, which resulted in his sister constantly hitting , the other girls would start to have heated debates and Charlotte, surprisingly, would always be apart of it.

By 12:30 pm, it was time for lunch. Everyone started to head to the food court to grab something to eat. All the girls (with the exception of Damon) had at least 2 bags in their hand from most of the stores they went to, except for Charlotte.

She was just so happy to grab something to eat. Alaine probably had at least 100 pictures of her in different outfits from different stores. It was exactly like softball practice: draining.

"Come on! Just one more picture?" Alaine begged.

"No, Alaine. I think Charlotte's had enough of playing a very one-sided game of dress up," Damon said. The other girls laughed.

Charlotte tried to smile but she couldn't. Wherever the group went, she couldn't help but think she was being watched. At first, she thought it might have been Damon, but he proved not to be perverted.

"Yeah, he's right. All I had to eat today was breakfast and I'm \*\*starving\*\*!" Charlotte exclaimed. Everyone agreed.

They all walked outside to the food court and immediately spread out to different food vendors and stands.

\_Grrrrrr...\_

Charlotte blushed to herself, embarrassed by how hungry she was. She looked around and spotted a Veggieland food stand.

She licked her lips.

As she made her way over, she felt a strange sense of déjà vu

overcoming her. She looked around to see if anyone was watching her, but she saw no one.

Sighing, she went to the stand.

"I'd like some curly carrot fries, a can of lemonade, and a veggie sandwich," Charlotte said.

"Is that all?" the cashier asked.

Charlotte nodded.

"Alright, that'll be \$4.56."

She grabbed her wallet and pulled out a \$5 dollar bill. She was about hand it to him when a hand stopped her.

"Sorry, but my girlfriend's already had something to eat, haven't you?" a voice asked from behind her.

Charlotte froze. She knew that voice anywhere.

She turned around slowly and her brown eyes met a bluish-purple color.

Jason.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>That's the end of Part 1 and give special thanks to Return to Neverland, who help build this story with me so far and check out her story, "The Secret lies with Charlotte".<strong>

**\*\*READ&REVIEW!\*\***

## 23. My Surprising Day with Alaine Part 2

**\*\*Well, welcome back and I'm SO SO SO SORRY for making you wait! This chapter is one that, in my opinion, is the most highly anticipated chapter so far besides the finale. And I want to say:**

><strong>

**\*\*YOOHOO! WE FINALLY HAVE OVER 100 REVIEWS!\*\***

**\*\*Also, I would like to give a special thanks to Return to Neverland for being my co-creator for this story and check out her story "The Secret Lies with Charlotte!"\*\***

**\*\*Now, ENJOY!\*\***

**\*\*P.S. You might not like what will happen to Charlotte in the beginning of this chapter!\*\***

\* \* \*

><p><strong><em>Previously...<em>\*\*

\_"We're staying overnight at the beach! SLUMBER BEACH PARTYYYYYYYYY!"  
Alaine sung in excitement.\_

\_In response, Charlotte accidentally did a spit tank with the orange juice she was drinking...and all went all over Alaine's face unfortunately.\_

\_"WHAT?!"\_

-. . . -

\_"MOTHER!" Karen screeched. She hated this punishment for years and the fact that Laguna did this to her while she is pregnant was flabbergasted.\_

"A hundred years and I still got it. Now listen Karen, and listen good. You are going to tell me where Charlotte is or so help me, I will have Jonathan come and put you in the pool and we all could wait hours for the ice to thaw.

Now what will it be?" Laguna asked menacingly.

-. . . -

\_She grabbed her wallet and pulled out a \$5 dollar bill. She was about hand it to him when a hand stopped her.\_

\_"Sorry, but my girlfriend's already had something to eat, haven't you?" a voice asked from behind her.\_

\_Charlotte froze. She knew that voice anywhere.\_

\_She turned around slowly and her brown eyes met a bluish-purple color.\_

\_Jason.\_

\* \* \*

><p><em><strong>Presently.<strong>\*\*.\*\*\*\*.\*\*\_

\*\*Charlotte's POV\*\*

Can a girl ever catch a break?

Today, I missed my training to have a day with some friends. And it turned out great!

Now I have to deal with him, that jerk-face, out of all people. Hell, I could have settled for Riley!

I quickly jerked away from Jason's perverted grasp and started walking away. I didn't need this, not today, of all days, and I didn't need \_him\_!

Suddenly, I tripped and almost fell to the ground. Almost.

I felt a pair of hands catch me and pull me back up.

Once I got back on my feet, I turned to the person who caught me and

said "Thanks for catching me like that but I-"

I stopped in mid-sentence when I realized who I was talking to was Jason's little brother, Jose.

"Long time, no see...\*\_Charlotte\_\*, " he said menacingly. I felt a pair of hands wrap around my waist and pull me into something...or someone.

I pulled my head and looked to see who was holding me. It was another one of Jason's cronies, Marick.

"Hello Gorgeous," he said to me.

\_Don't call me Gorgeous...\_I was tempted to say, but bite my tongue as I struggled to get out of his grasps.

"Don't bother. He has a strong grip on you," a voice said. I looked to my right to see Devin smirking at me.

"Oh, why don't you all go to hell! You guys are practically in your early 20's and I'm still 17! This is sexual assault!" I exclaimed, still trying to get out of Marick's grasp. I pushed against him, shoved him, and even stepped on his toes, yet he still wasn't budging!

"Bold talk for a small girl," said another voice. I looked to my left and saw Jonas, smirking at me as well.

"Bold talk for an idiot like you!" I exclaimed. I smiled to myself when I saw Jonas glaring at me.

Maybe I could provoke them all to the point Marick can let me go.

"Well, I highly doubt that," Jason said. The guys crowded into a circle and surrounded me.

"So, I guess a 'Welcome Back' would seem good. In fact, two months earlier, this is nearly the anniversary of the day we first met. But it seems that we won't have time for that," he said, "so, there's no one to save you now. No over-sized bodyguard or some mangy mutt. You are completely alone. What are you going to do now?"

I smirked at him. I didn't come alone, but I won't allow anyone to fight my battles for me either.

"Easy. This!"

I raised my right foot up as high as I can and **\*\*slammed\*\*** it hard on Marick's big toe.

Immediately, Marick let me go and went for his bruised toe.

"Yeee-OOOW!" he screeched as he started to rub his toe.

This gave me an escape before any of them made a grab at me.

I ran between him and Jose and shot off like a rocket.

"Don't just stand there! GET HER!" I heard Jason yell from behind me. I picked up my pace as I heard multiple footsteps right behind me. I ran in different directions into the crowd and managed to get them confused.

I searched my surroundings to look for any of my friends but it seemed that they were nowhere to be found. It was like they didn't want to be it didn't help that the food court was crowded either!

I looked around once more, still running for my life, until I found Damon standing next to a chili stand devouring a chili hotdog.

I stopped for a moment, just one moment, and yelled "DAMON!" as I waved both of my hands over at him.

I saw him look up from his hotdog and smile at me, but his eyes bugged out and widened.

I frowned at his expression and started to walk towards him until I felt someone cover my mouth from behind and something wrap around my legs. I started to trying to wiggle and squirm out of their grasp, but they wouldn't let go!

Immediately, I felt my body being hoisted into the air, but only enough to not get noticed, and came face to face with Marick and Devin.

"You know, it comes in handy to wear two belts," Devin said a little to tauntingly. I just glared at him.

They carried me away and I looked back at Damon, only to see that he was nowhere to be found.

I only \*\*\_hoped \_\*\*that he went to get help.

\* \* \*

><p>Marick and Devin carried me to an empty women's restroom and I noticed a metal chain across the entrance with a "<strong>CAUTION!</strong>" sign hanging on it. But, with me hoisted in the air, they just stepped over the chain.

When they got in, I saw Jason and the rest of his gang practically giving me their sickest smiles. Marick uncovered my mouth, but i just glared at him.

"Well, that was fast," Jason said, "did anyone see you?"

Marick shook his head. "Nah, we were in and out of there. Though she was trying to catch someone's attention, but they probably missed her."

"Good," Jason said, then rubbed his hands together, "now let's get this show on the road. Devin, unbind her."

Devin nodded and reached down to take off the belt.

Once I felt my legs get freed, I didn't hesitate as I raised my leg up and kicked Devin square in the nose!

I saw him fall to the ground with his hands covering his nose. I think I saw a little blood squirt as well.

Mermaid: 1

Bad Guys: 0

I felt Marick pull my arms behind my back and held them tightly. I watched as Devin got up with a bloody nose.

"You son-of-a-" he started.

"Sorry, I'm not a guy, I don't have kids, and I'm not a dog," I finished for him. He glared at me so hard that if looks could kill, I'd already be dead.

He was breathing hard and in pants. His brown eyes looked like he was out for blood and looked downright hungry, like an animal that spent days chasing after its prey and had grown savage.

He turned to Jason and said "I know we had a deal, but I'm sorry man."

Then, he turned back to me and in an instant, I felt his fist collide with my stomach and I felt my breath and my lights get knocked out of me.

Sure, in Atlanta, I had been beaten up a few times, but I have never taken a punch to my guts. And god did it hurt! It was like being hit by a 6-pound sledgehammer!

I grunted and doubled over in pain until I felt something collide with my chin \*\*hard\*\*, and my body, along with my head, shot straight up off the ground. It was then that I moaned in pain. I heard Devin chuckled.

Oh, he was enjoying this.

After that, I was repeatedly felt my conscience slipping as he continued to punch me in the stomach and kneaded me in the face.

\*\*Come on, come on, come on Charlotte! You're a mermaid for Pete's sake! Use your powers!\*\* I thought to myself but it wasn't working. I could use my powers on these idiots but how can I when I keep losing my breaths and the verge of losing my full conscious?

After one last punch, Marick finally let me go. I slid to the cold, tile floor with my hand clutching over my stomach.

Damn, it hurt!

I started to catch my breath by breathing into my nose and out through my mouth. I repeated this at least five times until I felt a strong hand grab me by the neck and lift me to my feet. I looked up to see it was Jason, smirking at me.

"Well, now you know what happens when you misbehave. You know, normally I would have said no. But this is like our third time



encountering each other. Did you really need to have someone rescuing you every time?" he asked me.

When I didn't answer, he dragged me and threw me headfirst into the wall at the end of the restroom. I hissed at the new in the back of my head.

I started to slide down the wall until Jason came up to me and held me into place.

I lifted my head slightly and dropped it. I could hardly catch my breath, much less concentrate on my powers.

I felt my left arm get pinned to the wall above my head and the same thing to my right arm. Then, I felt Jason's hand leave my throat and felt **\*\*both \*\***of his hands trailing both sides of my body.

Uhh, this will end badly for me.

"HEY! Didn't your mothers teach you that touching girls that are younger than you is illegal!"

Like an adrenaline rush, me, including everyone else, looked at the restroom entrance and saw Damon. My eyes widened in fear.

What the Hell! I wanted him to go get help, like the police or something. Not play hero!

Then, Jason chuckled. "And who are you supposed to be?"

"Easy. I'm the guy who's going to kick your butt! And what did you do to Charlotte?!" Damon demanded. He glared at Jason and his gang with hatred but looked at me with panic and worry.

Jason just shrugged.

"Easy. She just got punished for fighting back," he simply said. I knew he could about my wellbeing at the moment.

I saw Damon taking a few deep breaths and said "Well, if your done 'punishing' her, me,my sister, and the rest of her friends are worried about Charlotte, so..."

Then, he tried to run towards me.

But Jason gave Marick and Devin some invisible signal and, before I could warn him, the two grabbed Damon and pulled him to the ground.

"What the Hell!" Damon exclaimed, then calmed down, "listen, you don't have to do this. You guy can walk away now and I can promise that me and Charlotte won't speak of this to anyone, even the police. Just stop."

Jason nodded. "Yeah, that would be a good idea, but this virgin right here, assuming she is one, has given us trouble the last two times we met. And this time, we plan to do this meeting ..."

Jason made a gesture to Devin, who curled his hand up into a fist and landed a punch to Damon's stomach.

Like me, he had the wind knocked out of him. But unlike me, he never got a chance to catch a breath because Devin kept sending blows into him.

My eye widened in horror as I watched Damon get hurt because of...me.

God, why didn't I just say no and not joined Jason and his goons for lunch that day?!

My mind was so worried about Damon that I didn't feel Jason's hand get through my pant's zipper and...inside my underwear.

...

Just in time for Devin to punch Damon in the nose and blood to come out.

Instantly, the fear and exhaustion left me and I was refilled with anger and energy.

It was one thing to feel someone up and harass their friends.

...

But it was another to touch **\_\*\*my\*\*\_** crotch and beat my friend to a bloody pulp!

I looked around and realized my advantage now: I was in a restroom.

Restrooms had water in the toilets and sinks and I was a mermaid with the power to control and expand water.

BOY, did these guys pick a bad place to bring me... a **\*\*\_really\_\*\*bad** place.

I looked to my left and, passed Jonas, I saw the sinks and to my luck, they had handles.

With all my concentration, I turned my left hand towards the sinks and with a twist of my hand, one of the sinks started to run water out of it.

This got Jason's attention and he pulled his hand from out of my pants. Thank God!

Jason turned his head towards the running sink and said "Devin, turn that thing off!"

My eyes shifted to Damon. His bloody nose was running and, to my horror, a bit of blood was coming out of his mouth.

Devin dropped his fist and turned to Jason. "Why can't you do it?"

"Because I said so!" Jason snapped. As he turned back to me, I saw Devin groan and went to turn off the water.

Only it wouldn't stop running.

Devin kept turning the handles, but under my control, he couldn't.

"Jason, it won't work," he said, still trying to turn the water off. Jason snapped his head at him.

"What do you mean it won't turn off? Turn the handles stupid!"

"I mean, no matter what I do, the damn water won't stop!" Devin exclaimed.

"Well then, ignore it! We've got better things to do!" Jason told him.

But before Devin could walk away, I turned my hand again, causing the next sink to run. Devin went to turn that one off, but since it was also under my control, it wouldn't stop.

And then I continued.

One by one, water started to running from each sink and, for poor Devin, he \*\*still \*\*couldn't turn them off. Soon enough, all the sinks were running unstoppable.

"What the hell is going on here?!" Jason exclaimed. As he tried to molest me, he kept getting distracted and he hated it.

Then, he walked away from me and towards Devin.

Next, as fast as I could blink, he landed a sucker punch on Devin's face, causing him to fall head-first into the floor. Serves him right!

"I asked you to do one thing. One simple little thing, and you can't even do that!" Jason yelled, "if you want something done, you've got to do it yourself!". Then, he started turning the handles to turn the water off.

I looked towards Damon, who despite how bloody he looked, was relieved to actually breath. I had figured that the sinks would distract Devin long enough to stop, but now, I had other plans.

I looked towards my right and saw the restroom stalls.

I felt devilish smile forming on my face. \*\*(For my H2O readers, you know what I'm talking about! )\*\*

"Hey! What are you smiling about?" Jose asked me. I forgot that he was holding my right arm.

"Ooooooh...nothing!" I chimed in a sing-song voice.

Just as I said that, I twisted my right hand at an open stall and, with my powers, made the toilet flush and continued.

This also got Jason's attention. He walked away from Devin and went to the flushing toilet.

"What is going on here?" he asked himself. And then, with a twist of my hand, I caused water to rush out the toilet and completely exploded and doused him from head to toe.

He came out soaking wet and was pulling out wet tissue paper from his mouth.

\_Oh, \_the toilet I chose was clogged up. Oh Happy Day!

"Dude, what happened to you?" Jose asked his brother.

But before he could reply, I summoned all the toilets to flushing mode.

I watched as Jason and Devin entered all the stalls to see all the toilets flushing.

"Dude, I think we should leave," Devin suggested. By the looks of it, he was starting to lose his anger and was now starting to freak out. Huh, serves him right!

Jason looked at him in ridicule.

"Are you serious?! I haven't gotten what I wanted yet!" he exclaimed.

"Oh come on! You felt the girl in between her legs! I think you got something alright!" Devin countered.

At some point, I stopped listening and and looked back to Damon. I never looked closely, but I now noticed that his bottom lip was busted, his cheek was bruised, and his right eye was tuning black. A black eye.

Time to kick it up a notch!

I twisted my hand towards the sinks and, with a little practice from my two **\*\*\_new\_\*\*** powers, I caused the water to explode all over Jason, Devin, Marick, and Damon. It was a sight!

Next, I twisted my left hand and used my powers to make the toilets overflow. I got my job done when I heard a sickening sound from the stalls and the water started pouring out of the floor at quick speed.

I watched as Jason and Devin tried to stop the water from coming out of the sinks while Marick had dropped Damon to the wet floor and was trying to figure out what was going on with the toilets. I couldn't help it and made the water explode out of the toilet and hit him in the face like a water cannon!

Getting scared now, I saw Jonas and Jose release me and ran out of the restroom as fast as a cheetah. I

Hah! The look on Jose's face was priceless!

I zipped up my pants, looked down at the floor and noticed the water that was flowing around my boots. Water...

Crap! I forgot the **\_\*\*one \*\*\_**disadvantage of being a mermaid :

One drop of water and I sprout a tail!

I had to get me and Damon out of here before water sprayed me and everyone saw me in my tail...and I don't even want to **\*\*think \*\***of what Jason would do if he saw me.

I started to walk towards Damon, who was face-flat on the floor, until I found myself face to face with Jason and his remaining goons. All of them were soaking wet and their clothes were completely drenched from the blasts I sent them.

If the atmosphere wasn't so tense, I would have laughed in their faces!

Out of all three of them, Jason was the maddest. His face was pure red, if that was even possible, his hands were clenched into fists and his eyes just stood there, glaring holes into my body.

Part of me had almost suspected that he knew I was the one that caused the entire restroom to be on the verge of flooding, but the look in his eyes was completely, utterly...empty.

I stepped back and put my hands behind my back if they tried something, and by the way they acted, they would.

Jason started towards me and, before I could blast him, he grabbed my face forcefully and kissed me! KISSED ME! I swear, his lips tasted like a nuclear waste that was ready to explode and turn into toxic waste!

**\*\*THAT WAS THE LAST STRAW!\*\***

I kicked Jason in his baby maker and shoved him away from me as far as I could. When he was a good distance from me, I summoned the water from all over - the sinks, the toilets, and the floor - to my will and in one direct hit, Jason and the others were literally **\*\*blasted \*\*\_**out of the restroom and out into the crowd! I could hear them screaming like little girls as they ran away.

"Mmmmmmm..." I heard a moan. I looked down at Damon to see that he was passed out on the floor. He must have fell asleep as soon as Marick let him go, not that I blame him. He shouldn't have had to go through that.

I started walking towards him until I slipped and fell onto the wet, cold floor. I forgot that the sinks and toilets were still shooting water onto the floor.

And 20 seconds later, I sprouted my tail.

I quickly looked back at Damon's sleeping form. His head was slightly moving from left to right and continued to moan quietly. I had to dry myself off fast, and maybe the entire restroom, before he woke up.

I put my hand over my tail and closed it into a ball and did the same thing to my other hand as I directed it towards the floor. Then, I watched as my tail and the room went up in steam as the water quickly evaporated into the air and dried me off.

One of my favorite parts of being a mermaid with heat powers!

After a few minutes, I got my legs back and the floor was dry to the bone, along with the sinks and toilets. I got back up and quickly ran to his side.

"Damon, Damon wake up," I said as I shook him on his side, "please Damon, wake up. You don't want them to come back, do you?"

Honestly, I doubt that the gang would even return for another round of water blasts.

When he wasn't waking up, I did the most optional thing to do.

I raised my hand over his face and smacked him across his cheek as hard as I could!

In an instant, Damon's eyes popped wide open as he sat up straight and looked at me in shock.

"Did you just **\_\*\*slap\*\*\_** me?" he asked as he cradled his cheek.

"Well, how else was I supposed to wake you up?" I asked, "because I didn't think just dousing water on you would've worked."

He opened his mouth to say something back, but nothing came out.

"Alright, you win. But who were those guys and where did they go?" he asked. Thankfully, I could answer that.

"Well, some woman had heard the commotion in here and walked in. Seeing what was going on, she quickly ran out and went to get the cops. So, they let us go and ran to the hills like the cowards they were!" I stated. I laughed internally as I thought of the blast.

Damon nodded. "Alright, but **\_who\_** were they?"

I sighed. "To me, there a bunch of guys who have been after me since...well, for a while. This was as close as they've gotten so far. Now answer this for me: Why didn't you go get help?It would been far more better for BOTH of us if you did that!"

"And if I was too late? Charlotte, look at yourself in the mirror and tell me if what could have happened if I hadn't come in when I did," Damon said as we both got back on our feet.

I walked towards the mirrors and looked at the aftermath Jason and Devin left on me.

I had a noticeable hand print around my neck, my chin was all bruised up but nothing a little ointment couldn't do, and then I noticed how pale yet red-faced I looked.

Maybe Damon was right.

Maybe something **\_could\_** **\_had\_** happened.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>3rd POV<strong>

As soon as Charlotte and Damon got out of the restroom, they wasted no time looking for the girls. But it wasn't long when they found them huddled up at the water fountain.

All the girls were in shock, especially Dominique and Alaine, when they saw how battered they were.

"Oh my god! What happened?! Did Damon molest you or something?" Alaine asked as she rushed over towards Charlotte, completely leaving Damon hanging.

"Hey! I'll have you know that I'm the perfect gentleman! And I'll leave that to Charlotte to explain," he said, looking at Charlotte.

Charlotte glared at him accusingly and looked at Alaine. "No, he was fine. We both had a run in with a couple of bad guys and it...well we got away with a few bruises! Nothing to worry about!"

Alaine scoffed. "A few bruises? Nothing to worry about? You both need medical attention!"

Then, she turned to the group. "Did anyone bring a first aid kit?"

"I did, but it's in my bag...which is in my basket with the other bikes," a girl said sheepishly.

"Well, let's go. We are on a schedule and I for one don't like a change in them. So come on!" Alaine said as she grabbed Charlotte's hand and led everyone to the mall entrance.

When they got there, Charlotte got a good amount of ointment and makeup around her neck and her chin while Dominique fixed up her brother and put on eye patch over his black eye.

"Mom is going to **\*\*\_kill\_\*\*** you when you get home later," Dominique said to her brother.**\*\***  
><strong>

"Ah, don't worry! I'll just use some of mom's makeup in her room to cover it up," Damon said.

His sister raised an eyebrow. "Do you even know how to even put on makeup?"

Damon smiled in a cocky way. "Yeah, all I have to do is find the right skin tone, use a brush, and delicately brush it around my eyes like it says to do in your magazines!"

He smiled triumphantly until he realized that he just blew his secret.

"Damn you, Minnie!" he exclaimed. All the girls laughed as Dominique smacked him upside the head with a "Don't call me that!"

banter.

Alaine laughed and looked at Charlotte, who was laughing pretty hard, when she noticed something.

It never occurred to her, but Charlotte's laughs were different at times. When the two are alone, Charlotte usually gave out small laughs unless it's something really funny. But now, in a group, she was more vocal about it.

Maybe she should schedule more outings like this more often.

"Hey Charlotte," Alaine said, getting her friend's attention, "who attacked you and Damon exactly?"

Charlotte looked at her skeptically. But before she could reply, there was a loud screech coming from the mall entrance as two police cars parked in front of the mall.

"YOU LITTLE BITCH!" \*\* ( I will curse time from time so please excuse the language! ) \*\*

Everyone turned around to see Jason and his goons being taken out of the mall by police officers with handcuffs linking their hands behind their backs. Once Jason saw Charlotte and spat curses at her way as he struggled against the police officer holding him.

"THIS ISN'T OVER! I'M GOING TO FIND YOU, HUNT YOU DOWN, AND I'M GOING TO KILL YOU! AND I'LL MAKE SURE OF IT!" he yelled.

Jason then managed to get away from the police officer and came charging towards Charlotte.

Feeling the panic in her chest, and not wanting to use her powers this time, Charlotte quickly ran to Thomas's side and unleashed him. She watched as her dog made a run towards Jason, who he remembered \*\*really\*\* well, and leaped up on him, causing Jason to fall head first to the ground in the process. Next, after growling at him in a threatening manner, he calmly got off of him as the officer forced Jason to his feet and placed him into one of the police cars with the others.

Everyone watched as the cars sped off and Thomas walked towards Charlotte's side.

Charlotte knelt and rubbed his right ears. Thomas leaned into it.

"You are such a good boy! Did you know that?" she asked.

WOOF!

"I thought so."

\* \* \*

><p>After getting over the incident and locking Thomas back onto the bike, Damon went home and the group hit the road.<p>

It was fair to admit that the ride was long and slightly tiring, but



it was worth it. Nearly 5 hour of it.

Charlotte got a good look of the parts of California that she hadn't seen in the 3 months she had lived in Cali, but then again, she had gained her tail and new powers, so she didn't much sight-seeing unless she was in Paradise.

Occasionally, the group took breaks and stretched out their legs and arms for about 5 minutes, but as soon as they ended, the girls hit the road.

Finally, they arrived at the beach, Westward Beach. It wasn't as crowded as Paradise, but everyone could easily pick out a space to lay down on.

"Welcome to Westward beach!" Alaine as everyone parked their bikes and gathered their things.

"I thought we were going to pirate's Cove?" Charlotte asked as she slung her book bag on and picked up her guitar case. Alaine put on her bag and decided to carry the two sleeping bags.

"We are! You see that cliff over there?" Alaine pointed out. In her direction was a rocky cliff with boulders at the bottom. Charlotte's eyes caught the waves hitting most of the rocks.

"Yeah..." Charlotte trailed.

"Well, on the other side of that cliff is a secluded beach.  
\_\*\*THAT\*\*\_, my dear girl, is Pirate's Cove. It's just a 8-9 minute walk over there, plus we get free privacy! Cool huh?" Alaine asked excitedly. Charlotte spied the waves at the bottom of the cliffs hitting the boulders harshly.\*\*  
><strong>

\_Yeah, it would be if I planned on exposing my tail to everyone,  
\_Charlotte thought, \_and I don't.\_

What Alaine said was easier said than done. The whole point of being a mermaid is to keep it a secret. And the reason mermaids can't touch water is to avoid sprouting a tail! Sure her boots help keep the water from coming onto her unlike sneakers, but there's no way she'll be able to climb the boulders with her stuff, especially if they're wet.

"So that's where we're staying tonight?" Charlotte asked skeptically.

Alaine nodded. "Yep," she said, then looked at the others, "and by the looks of it, everyone's ready. So...let's head out girls!"

Following Alaine's lead, everyone started walking towards the beach. Charlotte internally groaned as she unlocked Thomas from her bike and put his leash on him before following behind the group.

Charlotte decided to walk behind the others, occasionally nodding and making small comments. she had a good idea on how she was going to avoid getting wet and which powers to use.

When they got to the boulders, Alaine wasted no time jumping through the water to get to the secluded beach. One by one, each girl did their best to dodge the waves but unfortunately got soaked.

Well, not Charlotte.

When the last girl had gone across, Charlotte looked around to make sure no one was then worked her magic. No pun intended.

She put down her guitar case and raised her hand towards the water in a claw-like gesture. She twisted it a few time and watched as the waves started to respond be becoming less aggressive and then, with one more twist, the waves stopped beating against the boulders and were now calm as it went up and down the sand.

Next, she widened her hand in a cupping gesture and slowly raised it in the direction of the water. It slowly started to form a hard pathway, hard enough to walk on.

Grinning to herself, she dropped her hand and picked up her guitar case again and, with Thomas by her side, carefully stepped onto the path.

At first, she started walking on a slow pace, but when she felt the wind blew hard and noticed that the waves were starting to pick up, she picked up her pace until she finally made it to the other she got off the pathway, Charlotte turned around to see it turn back into salt water.

Looks like her new powers can come in handy.

When Charlotte reached the others, they had already changed into their swimwear and were already splashing and playing around in the water.

On the sandy part of the beach, the girls had already settled down and rolled out their sleeping bags and and had made them form a big circle. It surprised her to see that Alaine had unrolled both of their sleeping bags and found her laying on her bag, sunbathing.

"I hope your wearing sunscreen because it would be a shame if you burned up, " Charlotte said as she walked towards Alaine. Knowing Thomas wouldn't run away, she took off his leash placed her guitar case down and took off her book bag as she sat down beside her friend.

Alaine made a face. "Girl, this tan can make anyone feel and look good. So what took you so long? Everyone unpacked already."

Charlotte gave a fake shrug. "I decided to wait it out since I didn't want to get wet."

"Wet? You don't even have a drop of water on you except for the bottom of your boots!" Alaine exclaimed.

"\_Anyways\_," Charlotte continued, changing the subject, "how come you're not out in the water with the others?"

"I sort of prefer pool water. I know it's stupid, but every time I

try to go swimming at the beach, my skin gets a little tingle and I start to feel a pull in my guts. Don't get me wrong! I love the beach, but when I feel that way, I stay away from the water. At the local pools, I don't feel that way," Alaine explained.

This was new information for Charlotte. Being a mermaid herself at the moment, she was literally getting all types of feels to go jump into the water. But she learned to keep it at bay.

"Well, I don't know about salt water, but th pull you feel from the ocean could probably be a good thing. It means that you're at peace and at home. You shouldn't be afraid of it. Instead, you should embrace it. I mean, aren't you a good swimmer?" Charlotte asked.

"Are you kidding me? I put the Dolphin Kick technique to shame! I mean, I'm a really good swimmer, but I'd rather help the environment if I had the choice," Alaine said. Charlotte noticed how her eyes lit up as she spoke.

"Hmm, maybe I'll get to see you swim one day," Charlotte said with a smile

"Maybe."

\* \* \*

><p>After 3 hours of fun and games, a few of the girls had gathered some rocks, leaves, and sticks to build a fire.<p>

And Charlotte may or may not have used her powers to start it.

Now, it was sunset and everyone was sitting around the campfire, eating s'mores that one of the girls brought along and were laughing and joking with each other.

"I'm telling you, he wet his pants that night and didn't even realize it until he came down for breakfast the next day!" Dominique cracked as she was telling embarrassing stories about her brother.

By now, all the girls' sides hurt because of how hard they were laughing.

"Alright, alright. Let's settle down now, we're all getting tired and soon we all need to get some sleep," Alaine said to calm everyone down. it worked and all of them layed down on their sleeping bags.

One of the girls noticed that Charlotte was drawing something in her journal and said "Hey, what's ya drawing?"

Charlotte looked up in surprise. Instead of saying anything, she revealed her drawings to the others. It was a sunset with a face on it. She had hardly painted in a while, so to be able to draw gave her a little comfort.

"I didn't know you could draw," Dominique said, "what else can you do? Sing?"

Alaine snorted. "Sing? She practically my rival in choir!"

Charlotte blushed. She didn't like all the attention.

"Sorry Alaine, but I prefer the terms "friendly rivalry" to describe it," Charlotte corrected. Alaine stuck her tongue out at her.

"Very mature Al."

Ria spotted Charlotte's guitar and suggested "Well \_Charlotte,\_why don't you play something for us? Are you as good as Alaine gloats about?"

She didn't know how, But Charlotte could tell that Ria was trying to make her feel uncomfortable on purpose. Apparently, being around Rikki so long gave her those vibes.

"Um sure, I mean if you want me to..." Charlotte trailed as she put her journal down and took her guitar out of the case. Then, she looked through her journal and found a song that she wrote while she was bored one day.

With her guitar in hand, she started playing the chords and began to sing.

**\*\*\_Maybe I'm grey\_\*\***

**\*\*\_Maybe I'm blue\_\*\***

**><strong><em>lately I don't know what to do<em>\*\***

**><strong><em>Don't be afraid of knowing me<em>\*\***

**><strong><em>Of seeing what your eyes can t see<em>\*\***

**\*\*\_What I am thinking\_\*\***

**><strong><em>What's inside,I've got nothing to hide<em>\*\***

**\*\*\_Undress my heart\_\*\***

**><strong><em>Let it go naked<em>\*\***

**><strong><em>I'm not ashamed<em>\*\***

**><strong><em>I'm not gone fake it<em>\*\***

**><strong><em>I will reveal<em>\*\***

**><strong><em>Everything I feel<em>\*\***

**><strong><em>What you to see every part<em>\*\***

**><strong><em>Of my naked heart<em>\*\***

**\*\*\_Maybe there's time\_\*\***

**><strong><em>Maybe there's none<em>\*\***

**><strong><em>Maybe you should wait until I'm done<em>\*\***

**><strong><em>How can we lose<em>\*\***

**><strong><em>It it's our fate<em>\*\***

**><strong><em>Uncover me before it's to late<em>\*\***

**\*\*\_What are you thinking\_\*\***

**><strong><em>What's inside, I've got nothing to  
hide<em>\*\***

**\*\*\_Unchain my mind\_\*\***

**><strong><em>Release my soul<em>\*\***

**><strong><em>Undo the hurt<em>\*\***

**><strong><em>Make my whole<em>\*\***

><strong><em>I'm no the one to stop you<em>\*\*  
><strong><em>Once you start<em>\*\*

Everyone looked up at her in surprise. Everyone, except for Alaine, didn't expect Charlotte to be \*\*that\*\* good.

"Well?" Charlotte asked expectantly. Everyone was staring at her with their mouths open and it was starting to freak her out a little.

Recovering from her shock, Ria scowled and didn't talk for the remainder of the night.

For the next 3 hours, the girls constantly danced and sang along to songs they had requested Charlotte to play. It was really fun, real fun for Charlotte since the volleyball game, but it was going to be a full moon soon and if she was going to find that moon pool, she had to do it alone, with the exception of Thomas.

By 10 o'clock, the fun finally stopped and everyone was tucked away in their sleeping bags, snoozing away, except for Charlotte and two were in their own little world as they quietly talked to each other while the others slept.

"You know, you never told me how you met Tessa and Willow. I mean, you're so sweet and they...are not so much. How were you even friends with them?" Charlotte asked. Alaine. She glanced at Thomas, who was snoozing away, but she knew she'd have to wake him up early.

"Girl, I don't even know. We met on our first day of high school. We met on our first day of high school. We were pretty much freshmen entering the 'Belly of the Beast'. I met Tessa when I got lost while looking for my 1st period. She saw me and, since we had that class together, she helped me out. Then, at lunch, she introduced me to Willow. From what they told me, they've been friends since they were in diapers," Alaine explained, "and they took me under their wings. We would have sleepovers together, go shopping, talk to cute boys, the whole thing!

I honestly don't know what changed.

Then, they have the nerve to tell me that the real reason they dropped me was to see if I'd stay 'loyal' to them. They pretty much tried to see if I'd find new friends after hurting me and still return to them! And to be honest, I'm glad I have you. You wouldn't hurt someone you cared about."

Charlotte highly doubt that. "You don't really mean that."

Alaine nodded. "I do. maybe you feel that way because those girls broke something in your head or something, but you really don't hurt the people you care about."

"You don't get it! I pretty much made their lives a living hell. Especially one of them, who I did and sad many unforgivable things to, bullied them, and harassed them. Trust me, I'm not like what you think I am," Charlotte confessed.

Alaine looked at her for a moment then grabbed her hand.

"Well, if I know any better, you are completely different from the girl you're telling me about. Because I know one thing for sure: If you weren't put on this earth to save the world or anything else, you were born to be someone's best friend. My best friend.

To be honest, if you truly were like that last year, then they must have done something to push you. No bad guy is created out of nowhere. Someone had to hurt to make you hurt and sometimes the way to stop that hurt is to ask for forgiveness," Alaine said.

Charlotte was surprised that Alaine considered her as her "best friend" and pondered on what she said.

"Will you forgive Willow and Tessa for what they did?" she asked.

Alaine nodded. "Maybe not now, because the pain still hurts, but I will eventually. Maybe the next time you see those girls, you can forgive each other for whatever happened, whether it's over being like them or just plain dating an ex-boyfriend."

Charlotte chuckled and smiled at Alaine. If only she knew that it wasn't that simple...

\* \* \*

><p>After a few minutes, Alaine finally went to sleep.<p>

Now it was time for Charlotte to put her plan into action.

She had pulled her backpack close to her and pulled out her flashlight and slowly crawled out of her sleeping bag. She had a feeling she was going to need it. Then, she started to wake up her dog.

"Thomas...Thomas...THOMAS!" she screamed/whispered.

Thomas's eyes popped open and sat straight up. He knew what she needed.

Charlotte scanned the area to make sure everyone was fast asleep before slowly getting on her feet and walking rocky walls of the beach. Thomas followed her.

He went ahead and started sniffing around. Then, after a few minutes, he halted and stopped sniffing. Charlotte looked around and realized that this was the place where the tunnel opened up in her dreams.

Instantly, there was a huge pull in her guts and she looked up at the night sky.

Before her glory was the full moon, and like in her dreams, it was glowing brightly! Charlotte had to force herself to shield her eyes and turn her head away. It may have been her dream that allowed her to see the light, but in reality, it could make her go blind.

When she was ready, Charlotte opened her eyes and looked in shock at the rocky wall that was once there was now a tunnel. Then, she looked down at Thomas, only to see that he wasn't there and only his

footprints in the sand were leading into the tunnel.

"Oh boy," Charlotte said as she turned on her flashlight before walking in.

The light helped as she started walking alone. Part of her was anxious to get this whole ordeal over with. She could practically feel her heart beating out of her chest rapidly. But another part of her felt...calm? Well, she would have to think about that later.

WOOF!

Hearing Thomas bark, Charlotte stopped walking and ran through the tunnel. If something bad happened to him, she would never forgive herself.

When Charlotte finally got to the end of the tunnel, she swore her heart stopped and dropped her flashlight.

She couldn't believe it.

Right in front of Charlotte, as clear as day, was a GIANT, crystal blue pool. And it was bubbling fast.

Everything was the same: the circular rocky walls, the thousand of sparkling blue crystals glowing from within them...and the huge opening in the ceiling with the moon starting to rise over the 100 ft moon pool.

The pull Charlotte had felt earlier was getting bigger and stronger that she unconsciously started walking towards the pool.

She watched as the bubbles that submerged from the pool increased at a rapid pace. Each step strengthen the pull inside of her, the burning desire to jump in increased.

...

**\*\*WOOF!\*\***

Something snapped in Charlotte's head as her eyes popped open and, missing her step, slipped and fell to the ground.

Ouch!

She sat up and turned to her right to see Thomas standing next to her. And by the look in his eyes, he was relieved.

"What was that for!?" Charlotte exclaimed. Thomas turned his head towards the pool and she looked in his direction and saw why he did it in surprise.

She was 3 steps off from jumping in the pool. And he stopped her just in time.

Bless that dog!

"Wow..." a familiar voice said from behind said from behind her. Too familiar...

Charlotte snapped her head around, looked behind her and got really scared for who she saw.

Alaine.

Like lightning, Charlotte quickly got on her feet and ran to Alaine's side with Thomas by her side.

"What are you doing here?!" Charlotte asked frantically. She truly cared about Alaine, but if she jumped into the moon pool and became a mermaid...the thought terrified her.

"Easy. I woke up to find you and Thomas gone and a tunnel suddenly appeared out of, being the curious little bee I am, I got up and came in," Alaine said to her eyes now on the pool,"and I don't regret it."

Charlotte recognized the look on Alaine's face. If this moon pool gave off some mesmerizing feel that could affect Alaine like it did her, then Charlotte officially need to get her out of here.

"\_Now , why would you want to do that?\_" a creepy yet familiar voice echoed through the cave. Charlotte felt a shiver run down her spine with the knowledge of who that exact voice belonged to.

Marana.

Charlotte looked back at Alaine, but she didn't seem phased. Her eyes were still glued to the moon pool.

"\_There's nothing wrong with letting her be like you. You say she doesn't understand the ordeals you went through, right? So let her. I'm sure your time together would go...swimmingly,"\_ Marana said.

Charlotte looked back at Alaine, now sure that Marana put her under some type of trance to keep her from hearing them.

Like the dream with her and the girls being friends, it did sound tempting. And easy. Alaine would know the \*\*actual \*\*truth of what happened and she wouldn't be alone with her secret...

Charlotte stepped out of the way and let Alaine slowly walk past her and started walking towards the moon pool.

Alaine already called her a best friend. And best friends do everything together...maybe it was for the best...

"\_Yes, let her enter the moon pool...\_" Marana said.

Once again, Charlotte got lost in a trance and watched as Alaine got closer...

...

...

...



...

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

**\*\*WWWWWWOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOFFFFFFFFFFF!\*\***

**\* \* \***

><p><strong>Alright, I'm going to end this here! And no, this will NOT be a third part, but the next chapter will take place on a Monday!<strong>

**\*\*YAY!\*\***

**\*\*So, who's loving the Charlotte and Alaine bonding? And let's give Charlotte and Thomas 3 cheers for whipping Jason and his gang's butts!\*\***

**\*\*READ&REVIEW!\*\***

**\*\*Please! It hurts to have a large amount of people read this story but only a small part review! I welcome all opinions, just not HATE!\*\***

24. The Unexpected Aftermath

**\*\*Hello everyone! It feels so good to hear from you guys and read your comments (and hear them from people who only read this without reviewing!)\*\***

**\*\*First of all, for my last chapter, I want all of you guys to know, as I said in Chapter 7, that I would be using Kate Alexa songs and have them penned in this story by Charlotte. So, the song sung by Charlotte was "Naked Heart" by Kate Alexa.\*\***

**\*\*ENJOY!\*\***

**\* \* \***

><p><strong>September 20th, 2009...<strong>

**\_\*\*At Paradise Cove...\*\*\_**

**\*\*Charlotte's POV\*\***

Have you ever been cursed out before when someone was angry at

you?

For me, yes. Plenty of times actually, though I won't say when.

But have you ever been cursed out by an immortally-vowed mermaid in Dolphin language?

That's a new one, even for me. And a slightly horrifying that I won't even dare want to repeat!

Here I was, in the back of the Paradise Cafe, sitting on the couch in the back office, facing the wrath of the Cove family.

Mainly Laguna.

You see, after all the girls woke up this morning, we all packed our stuff and decided to leave. Elaine had no memory of what happened in the cave, except for seeing the tunnel. Once we got on our bikes and hit the road, I split from the group and me and Thomas headed towards Paradise Cove.

It took a short 16 minutes to get there, but once I got to the cafe parking lot, I parked my bike and let Thomas onto the beach.

I know that was against the law, but I hoped I can get Laguna to change it.

Anyways, as I entered the cafe, I was spotted by Karen, who for some reason was wearing a coat and sniffing. She came waddling towards me.

"Charlotte!" she said as she embraced me, "what happened to you? You had me and my mother worried when you didn't show up for training yesterday, and I had to take a cold ice bath, made by my mother, to keep your location a secret! What happened?!"

Well that explained to me why she looked like that. Karen was fighting a cold.

"Long story, but let's just say I spoke to my 'sister' and got this!" I said as I pulled a blue crystal from my pocket and handed it to Karen. She took it in her hand and almost dropped it.

I guess she could feel the power radiating from it.

She gave me back the crystal and didn't hesitate to rush me into the back office...right to Laguna.

So here I am, sitting right in front of my mentor, hearing nothing but dolphin noises coming out of her mouth, which were direct towards me. At first, I thought she had some recorder on her and that's where the noise was coming from, but after looking and listening closely, I realized that it was truly coming from her. Yikes!

Karen was looking giving me a look between amusement and pity, Jonathan was glaring at me as usual, and Brendan looked like he was going to burst with laughter. I'm glad someone's finding this amusing.

Eventually, Laguna had calmed down enough and started talking human

English.

"Charlotte Watsford, what were you thinking?! Do you have any idea how worried I was?! It wasn't fair that I had to give my pregnant daughter a cold ice bath against her will to weasel out your whereabouts only for her to get sick, tear my hair out with worry, and constantly use my powers to make things to put my frustrations upon! Now you have 1 minute to tell me where you were or I swear I'll..." Laguna trailed. But before she could finish that sentence, I pulled out the crystal I had shown Karen earlier and by the look on Laguna's face, it had said it all.

I had found my moon pool.

"I'm not ungrateful nor am I selfish, Laguna," I said, "but my day out with my friends was really my mission to find the moon pool. Only once I did, I almost let me 'sister' convince me to let my best friend be turned into a mermaid last night. So here's the long version of what happened..."

\_\*\*Flashback...\*\*\_

\_I stood in a trance as I watched Alaine walked towards towards the moon pool. Marana had a point. It would be much more easier if Alaine was like me.\_

\_After all, I had lied to her multiple times and I could finally be able to tell her my ugly truths about me. If she truly was my best friend, she would accept me for who I was.\_

\_A girl with way too many secrets to handle. A girl whose had done many bad things in a short period in a year. A girl who will most likely do damage to others without intending to.\_

\_I watched her step closer and closer towards the pool, getting ready to let herself become like me...\_

\_\*\*WWWWWWOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOFFFFFFFFFFF\*\*!\_

\_Something snapped in my head and I was once again brought out of my trance. I shook my head and rubbed the temples on my forehead.\_

\_What was going on?\_

\_I looked at Thomas, who was looking at me like I was crazy and was barking in the direction in front of me. I looked at his direction and my eyes widened as I saw Alaine just inches from the jumping into the moon pool.\_

\_Without thinking, I raised both of my hands up in the air in Alaine's direction and, like Laguna taught me, I brought her up into the air.\_

\_This was like what I did to the girls in Australia when I had rose them from the ground and dropped them from five feet in the air. Bad memory!\_

\_Alaine wasn't moving. She was just hanging there. So, I assumed that

she was either unconscious or she just was too deep in a trance.\_

\_I looked up at the moon and saw that it was starting to go away. Good, but wouldn't that mean...\_

\_I felt the ground rumble from beneath me and I knew I had to place Alaine down gently. So, I moved her away from the pool and brought her close enough and laid her down gently. At that moment, I rushed to her side to see that she was indeed unconscious. \_

\_So, I picked her up from the ground and swung her arms around my shoulder so I could carry her.\_

"\_\*\*What are you doing? Isn't this what you wanted? For her to be like you? Someone to understand and accept you?" \*\*\_\_I heard Marana's voice echo. God, I was going to need earplugs to block her out!\_

"\_NO! Even if that is true, what I am is more of a curse than a blessing! It may have some perks that I may be starting to learn to like again, it doesn't mean that someone else has to live like that. I'm talking about another girl's life changing drastically to fit \*\*my \*\*needs!" I said, "and I refuse to let you make the choice for me!"\_

\_I felt the ground shake from beneath me and I knew I had to get Alaine and Thomas out of here. \_

\_"Thomas come on!" I yelled as I started towards the tunnel with Alaine. I heard my dog bark and his feet coming towards me.\_

\_"\*\*You will regret this...\*\*" Marana said, her voice echoing, causing the the ceiling to shake. I looked up and saw rocks begininng fall to the ground and I knew I had to leave when boulders started falling.\_

\_"Let's get out of here!" I yelled and started out into the tunnel.\_

\_Instantly, the cave collapsed entirely above them. The moon pool began to sink into the earth, possibly deeper if possible, the cave wallstarted to crackup and then fall to the ground, leaving dust and rubble in it's place. And in the cave ceiling, with the moon already far away from the center, started to close in.\_

\_With Alaine on my back, carrying her to the exit was a little tough, but being buried under a pile of rocks was what drove me to keep going.\_

\_"Mmmm..." I heard my friend moan beside me. My eyes widened as I stopped in my Alaine woke up...\_

\_I was minutes away from lifting my head up and praying to whoever was a higher up in heaven. She could \_\*\*not \*\*\_remember this, like at all! Plus, I don't even know how I'm supposed to explain this to her when she wakes up.\_

\_Depending if she wakes up that is...\_

\_I mentally shook that thought out of her head and continued dragging

(and I use that term loosely)Alaine through the the tunnel as I felt the tunnel shaking. I looked behind me and saw Thomas running towards me. And behind him, the tunnel was falling in right behind him!\_

\_"If there's a God...I hate my life..." I muttered as I picked up my pace. I picked up Alaine and was now practically carrying her. My eyes went to see Thomas running by my side.\_

\_I saw the exit up ahead as I and I jumped as the collapsing tunnel was catching up to us. I was doing a mental countdown until I got out.\_

\_10...\_

\_9...\_

\_8...\_

\_7...\_

\_6...\_

\_5...\_

\_4...\_

\_3...\_

\_2...\_

\_1...\_

\_"JUMP!" I exclaimed as we jumped out of the exit and landed on the sand. I looked to my side to see Thomas breathing heavily beside me and check on Alaine, to see that she was still unconscious. I turned around to the tunnel and watched as the collapsed and turned back into the rocky wall that it was before.\_

\_"Great, just great, now how am I going to get proof of that place?" I asked to myself. The mega moon pool goes to self-destruct mode when the moon passes over. Clever, but deadly. Great...\_

\_I picked up Alaine and carried her back to our campsite. I looked around to see that the girls were undisturbed by the events of what had just happened. Almost like they never felt or heard anything at all. I was starting to consider that they were under the veil that my mother was under the night of the Water Snake.\_

\_I placed Alaine back into her sleeping bag and zipped it back up. I went back to my sleeping bag and laid down in it as I thought of what just happened.\_

\_My moon pool was not an ordinary, small moon pool. It was a mega moon pool large enough to turn a team of foot ball players into mermen, and possibly even larger.\_

\_It was as attractive as a magnet. Even a completely, normal person could be drawn to jump in it. It was so easy to feel tempted.\_

\_And the big one, it was under Marana's full control. Or at least, to the point where she can put me and other people in a trance.\_

\_I saw Thomas lie next to me and I gently rubbed his right ear.\_

\_"Thomas, what am I going to do?" I whispered to him, "I could have gotten any evidence to give to Laguna to show that I didn't skip training for nothing and apologize for not telling her. What now?"\_

\_Thomas raised his head up and, despite the dim light, I saw something sparkling from his mouth.\_

\_"What's that you got there boy?" I asked.\_

\_He dropped the item onto my lap and I got a hold to it. Though it was the reaction I was not prepared for.\_

\_It was a oval, blue crystal. It was about the size of my palm, but something was different about it. I felt a large mass of energy coming from the crystal, but just like the cave, it was giving off a bad vibe, almost ...wicked.\_

\_I dropped the crystal onto the sand, and like that, the feeling was gone.\_

\_I looked at Thomas, who was looking at me exceptionally, and said "I really owe you for stopping me back there, don't I?"\_

\_In response, he whined and licked my cheek. I'll take that as a: Yes.\_

\*\*\_Flashback ends...\_\*\*

"...and that's how I got out of the cave. The next morning, Alaine woke up and told me about her dream of how she walked through tunnel and saw a sparkling pool. I quickly dismissed it as a dream, though I think she's onto me," I concluded.

By now, the whole family was staring at me with wide eyes. Honestly, I wouldn't have cared if they believed me, but the point is that Marana built a pool that she could lure anyone into and I am living proof of that.

Laguna was the first to snap out of it. She reached into her pocket, pulled out a set of keys and gave it to Jonathan.

"You. Get the boat," Laguna commanded, "you are going to watch Charlotte and \_you\_," she said to Brendan, "are going to be Charlotte's exercise teacher for the day."

Jonathan, no surprise, glared at Laguna. "I will not play babysitter for these two juveniles! And why do I have to watch them anyways? The only reason I came her was because Karen was sick because of the ice bath \*\*\_you \_\*\*gave her because \_\*\*she, \*\*\_" he pointed to me, "decided to skip out on you!"

"She did that because she wanted to be sure the moon pool was real!" Karen defended me, "and last I check: 1. I can take care of myself,

2. You know Mother would have done the exact same thing if she had the vision, and 3. You're supposed to have a day off today and since you are here, you have to do it!"

I jumped up, confused at what was going on.

"I'm sorry, what am I supposed to do and why does it require Brendan being my exercise teacher or something?" I interjected.

Karen was giving me a skeptic look while Brendan was looking oddly excited.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>3rd POV (written by Return to  
Neverland!)<strong>

Jonathan ordered Charlotte and Brendan to meet him at the pier while he went to get the Cove's boat that was docked nearby. Charlotte begrudgingly obliged to the command before making her way to the end of the pier with Brendan, still unsure as to what they were doing.

While making her way to the end of the pier accompanied by Brendan, she could also hear the distant padding of paws on the wooden planks that made up the pier. Along with the distant barking of Thomas calling out, in Charlotte's mind, this meant for her to slow down and wait for him.

Charlotte then glanced back to see the pit bull with racing towards them with his tongue flying out his mouth, the sight making Charlotte chuckle slightly before she turned her attention back to Brendan to ask him for the sixth time since exacting the restaurant, what exactly it was that they were going to be doing.

Brendan still held the excited look he wore since finding out that his talents would be need for the first time since the Coves took Charlotte under their wing, helping and honing the newly changed Charlotte's mermaid skills.

Though they were aware of her time as a mermaid previously it seemed that the mermaids who resided in Australia did not exactly help her properly hone her mermaid potently, leaving Charlotte out in the cold and having abused her powers due to the fact that she didn't know her own strength this lead to her premature lose of her mermaid powers, but the Cove's did not use this against her in fact they embraced who she was and accepted it, all except Jonathan.

Whose voice could now be heard crying out to the two teens who had just reached the end of the pier with Thomas now in tow.

"Hurry it along, I haven't got all day to babysit!" Jonathan yelled venom lacing each word, as he steered the boat closer to the pier.

Charlotte and Brendan both turned to each other, giving each other a "He's such an ass" look, before Brendan's smile returned and he winked at Charlotte before he gave himself a running start and bomb dived right next to Jonathan's boat, creating a huge splash which soaked Jonathan in the process.

Charlotte wasn't sure how she held the laughter in, but knew if she were to laugh then, who knew what Jonathan would do. So she simply smiled and Jonathan shot her the evil eye before Brendan rose out of the water and Jonathan sent all his anger towards him.

Charlotte then took this momentary distraction to tell Thomas to sit and stay until she got back, knowing that he would do exactly that, before she turned to the ocean and dived in much more gracefully than Brendan had, he then waited for the change to take place before she made her way over to Brendan in mermaid form.

"Get ready for mermaid boot camp! Today, I'll be your trainer. Now drop and give me twenty! Move, move, MOVE!" Brendan yelled at her in a commando voice before dropping the facade and giving her a cheeky grin.

Charlotte then gave him an eye role, before she heard Jonathan booming voice scolding them.

"Brendan, this is not a joke! What she did was stupid and reckless, not to mention she could have exposed your mother and you! Now tell the girl what her punishment for such acts of stupidity is!" he said, not bothering to even refer to Charlotte as an actually human being, but just as a thorn that was stuck to his side.

Brendan gave his step father the evil eye before informing Charlotte as to what they were actually doing, finally answering the question she had been asking since leaving the restaurant, but she was not happy with what the answer was.

"We are doing drills Charlotte. Well, you are and I will be instructing . We will swim out past where the beach goers are allowed to swim out too, and I will teach you exercise drills mermaid style."

"That's ridiculous. You have got to be joking," Charlotte expressed with a laugh, waiting for Brendan to break the act at any moment, but he didn't.

"You're not joking," Charlotte's moaned, and her face fell.

"I'm afraid not," Brendan replied.

"Really?!" Charlotte whined.

"Really, so let's get a move on before the grump in the boat gets any angrier, and trust me, he can," Brendan stated.

"Let's get this over with then", Charlotte said. She had a feeling that it was going to be a long day.

\* \* \*

><p>As soon as they had started their drills, Charlotte was over it. Though she had gotten fitter since joining the softball team, slimmed down and become much fitter than she was, softball was one thing and mermaids drills, well, they were a completely different story.<p>



You would think it would be easier to do seeing as they were under water but that was not the case. It took a lot of strength to swim with a tail and though at times it seemed as easy breathing, it took a lot of effort at times especially when doing drills. Brendan had her diving down as far as she could go, making sure that she reached her maximum limits, before allowing her to return to the surface and oxygen. He then had her practicing different types of swimming styles such as water cycles, where he would have Charlotte do underwater somersaults until she was dizzy or couldn't hold her breath much longer.

Charlotte was made to do another number of underwater swim training until she couldn't take any more and once again made her way to the surface.

"Aha,aha,aha..." Charlotte panted as she gasped for breath once she reached the surface of the water, doing the Little Mermaid style flinging of her brown hair back as she took in the precious air.

Not two seconds later, Brendan joined her as he took a less exasperated breath.

"Brendan I know I'm a mermaid and all, and I can breath under water, but do you want me to die?!" Charlotte gasped, once the air had returned to her lungs.

Brendan then gave her a look of apology before he looked over at his step father in the boat not ten feet away from where they were. Then, he turned his attention back on Charlotte.

"I'm sorry Charlotte, really I am. You know I wouldn't be doing this if it wasn't for peeping Jon over there," Brendan apologized.

Charlotte then let out a laugh at he's choice in phrasing, because as soon as they had started on her training, Charlotte was planing her escape . That was until Brendan informed her that Jonathan would be keeping an eye on them through the use of an underwater camera that had been hooked to the bottom of his boat and was connected to the iPad he had brought with him, thus preventing them from escaping his gaze.

"I know it's not your fault. I know you wouldn't be this cruel to me on purpose, would you?" Charlotte asked, raising a question eyebrow at Brendan.

Brendan then let out a laugh before replying "No, I wouldn't. My step-dad, well, he's another story."

"Oh well. I suppose that if we can't escape him, we better get back to you killing me," Charlotte stated with a laugh.

Then, a devilish grin spread across Brendan's face as he looked at Charlotte, then back to his step dad's boat, then back at Charlotte again.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" Charlotte asked before realization hit her. "No Brendan don't! I'm already in trouble and I don't want to make it worse, and bring you down with me!"

Brendan just smiled at her, before Jonathan's voice rang out.

"What are you two doing? Get back to your drills!"

They both looked over to the angry man's face before turning back to each other.

Brendan then gave Charlotte a look before saying "Leave it to me," and asking her to begin her water cycles again.

They both dived down into the ocean and Charlotte started her water cycles. Meanwhile, Brendan dived down under the boat out of view of the camera, then with all the force he could muster, he slammed his tail into the camera shattering it while making sure not to damage the boat too bad so his step father could be able to get back home.

Brendan then speed swam over towards Charlotte, grabbed her arm while she was mid-somersault, and shot out into the open ocean as far as their tails could take them before finally stopping for air.

Both Charlotte and Brendan rose to the surface and looked at each other in silence until they both started bursting out laughing.

"I c-can't b-believe you d-did that! W-we are g-going t-to be in s-so much t-trouble!" Charlotte managed to say through fits of laughter.

"I k-know b-but it w-was w-worth it!" Brendan replied while, like Charlotte, was struggling to speak through the laughter.

Then once the laughter faded they managed to get all be able to speak.

"Jonathan is going to be so pissed," Charlotte said, fear starting to replace the joy that had once been there.

"Who cares!? I can handle him," Brendan replied.

"You may be able to. But as you might already know him and I aren't really on the best of terms, for some reason unknown to me, and this little stunt will only harden the hatred he has for me," Charlotte explained.

"Who cares about him at the moment. Just loosen up a little bit because there's more to being a mermaid than stupid drills," Brendan stated.

"Yeah? Like what?" Charlotte asked.

"You know for someone who has been a mermaid before, you really don't know much about being one," Brendan replied.

Charlotte face fell at the mention of her old life, remembering those painful memories as they flooded into her mind for however brief a moment before she turned her attention back to Brendan.

"Well I wasn't one for very long, and even though I was with other mermaids, I was alone and didn't want help. I thought I could get through it on my own so I shut them out when they tried to help and

they did try to help me one point, but it only because they were asked and well I was to consumed in my own selflessness to help myself," Charlotte explained.

Brendan was a bit taken back to Charlotte confession but he didn't judge her and knew that she wasn't that person anymore. She was his friend now.

"Well you are not alone now," Brendan informed Charlotte, who then gave him a thanking smile.

"Thank you. It's just that I had to figure it all out by myself the first time I learned how to control my powers and everything. I was by myself then," Charlotte said

"Being a mermaid, or in my case a merman, isn't just about your powers. There is so much more," Brendan explained. Obviously, she needed to see what an average, natural mermaid saw.

"Like what?" Charlotte asked.

"Let me show you," Brendan replied. He then outstretched hand to Charlotte implying for her to take it, but she just looked at his had like it was a foreign object.

"Come on, just take it," Brendan said.

Charlotte was hesitant but she took his hand and he gave her a smile before the both submerged into the water and swam slowly deeper into the open ocean.

Brendan then stopped Charlotte and looked into her eyes before gesturing for her to close them, which Charlotte obliged to Brendan, then tapped on her ears which she took as opening her ears to the ocean around her and letting the ocean tell her where to go.

A couple minutes passed until Charlotte heard a sound, like that of singing she opened her eyes to see two giant whales just in front of her close enough to touch. It was the most beautiful sight she had ever seen, a smile spread across her face as she took in the sight I front of her, before turning to face Brendan who had the same smile placid on his face, with his hands still intertwined in hers, they then turned their attention back to the whales floating there until they finally passed by them while still singing their song.

And it was in this moment, however brief it was, that Charlotte thought that even though she was a reincarnated mermaid who's sister was after her, maybe this wasn't a curse. Maybe this was gift like another start over to become who she was meant to be, whoever that was, in this moment she was a mermaid a part of the sea and tomorrow she might come to her senses and realize that she didn't deserve this and she would have to face what Marana had in store for her. But for now, for now she was free.

\* \* \*

><p>A few hours passed after the daring escape. By the time they got back to the beach, they had swam to the end the beach and crawled behind some boulders to avoid being seen by anyone.<p>

"This won't last long," Charlotte said as she laid on the sand. "I think Thomas is self-trained to recognize my sent from a given distance. Hell, even in my mermaid form, he could find me in a mile from here!"

Brendan laughed. "Ha! Was he trained by the military or something?"

"Nope. In exchange for giving him a home, he'll be there for me to help me keep my secret," she replied, "in fact, I swear he trained himself to find me and help me at every given chance he gets. He's never abandoned me, and I would do the same for him."

He just looked at her. "Man, that's deep."

Once they were sure that they were alone, Charlotte closed both of her hands into a fist and started to dry her's and Brendan's tails.

"So, this is one of the powers of a southern mermaid? Why can't ANY mermaid have that power? It's **\*\*\_extremely\_\*\*** helpful!" Brendan exclaimed.

"Yeah, but like a certain mermaid in Queensland that I knew, this power can make anything hot and potentially kill someone, especially the upgrade powers. So, I try to only use this power unless it's needed," Charlotte said.

After a few minutes, their tails disappeared and they were back in their original clothes.

"Great! Now, all I have to do is get Thomas, grab my bike, and get the hell out of here before I get stopped by He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named," Charlotte said sarcastically as she got on her feet and helped Brendan up.

"Should have figured you were the Harry Potter type of girl. Riley's being going on and on about how you were a Twilight type of girl," Brendan chuckled.

Charlotte did a whiplash and eyed the boy carefully. "What are you talking about?"

"Easy. Riley has an obvious crush on you. You didn't notice?" Brendan asked.

To be honest, Charlotte never saw it as a crush. It was more like "Guy-Hits-On-Girl-In-The-Wrong-Ways". No attraction, at least now, but just a thin line between being friends with him and disliking the guy. Seriously, she hasn't even spoken to him in a while. What type of friends were they?

"Easy. He made me mad and had the nerve to ask me out before he even got a chance to know me. Of course I turned him down."

Brendan made a look. "No wonder he's got his eyes on you. You basically don't want him!"

"**\*\*Oh\*\***,\_ he's basically after me to...wait a second! I am NOT talking about my love life to a little kid!" Charlotte said

astonishingly.

"Hey! This kid is about 13-14 years old and I know what I'm talking about. Believe it or not, I nearly convinced my folks into letting Riley in on our big secret, but, of course, my step-dad had to open his mouth and now, the only guy that I can actually get along with is practically clueless about me!"

"I'm sorry, but from what I hear, **\*\* you \*\*** have a crush on him!" Charlotte stated, "now if you excuse me, I gotta run!"

Turning her back to him, she pulled her hand to her chest, which rendered herself invisible, and walked away.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Charlotte's POV<strong>

I'm so mad, I could scream! It's bad enough Riley had to blab his mouth about me to Brendan, who probably told his mom about it, who might have told Laguna. Now, he's stereotyping me! And just because I like to read doesn't mean that I'm OBSESSED with them, especially the pairings!

First off, my decision not to date is still active and I just don't want to get involved with anybody. Trust me, my pride was gone for a while and my insecurities were just starting to die down a little.

Secondly, I have way too much on my plate to even be thinking about dating. I have evil, little visions that can pop up into my head at any moment, have a tail and powers that, despite getting back into the routine, that I don't want, and most importantly, my life is in danger because of me being a mermaid in the first place!

Sometimes, I really regret begging not my mom to stay in Atlanta.

And now, not that I'm angry about it, I have to apologize to Brendan for practically calling him gay. It's not that I have anything against it, though I'm all for accepting one's sexuality, but that was pretty low of me to say. And I have said some pretty low things before.

I came out of my thoughts and looked around at my surroundings. I didn't realize that I was walking towards the cafe. The smell of cooked seafood being served and deserts came to my nostrils and my mouth watered.

I honestly never smelled anything more delicious in my life, and with my mom being a chef, I've smelled a lot of things. Closing my eyes, I slowly started to walk towards the entrance when I suddenly ran into someone and fell onto the sand. I felt my hand drop and I was now visible again.

I looked up at who I ran into and as they say, "Speak of the Devil and the Devil appears".

It was Riley.

## 25. What's A Mermaid To Do?

**\*\*Hello everyone! Sorry, I haven't updated in a month, I've been busy. Well, from what I see so far into the story, there is a new number of reviews: 125 reviews. \*\***

**\*\*125.\*\***

**\*\*THAT. IS. AMAZING! And judging from what I also see, there are 14 favorites and 20 followers! To be honest, I honestly didn't expect many people to like a Charlotte story, much less follow it, but I want to thank you all for giving me a chance!\*\***

**\*\*ENJOY!\*\***

**\*\*P.S. I have a new one-shot called 'I'll Swim Faster'. If you're a Mako Mermaids fan, especially an Evie fan, go check it out!\*\***

**\*\*P.S.S. It's my birthday this month! March 29th to be exact! Feel free to leave or write me something :D\*\***

**\* \* \***

><p><strong>Charlotte's POV<strong>

Really? Out of all the guys I seem to attract around here, much to my displeasure, I have to run into the ONE guy I really didn't want to see right now! I swear, if there's a god up there, he hates me right now.

Riley looks down at me for a moment before remembering his manners, like he has any, and helps me off the ground.

"Oh, hey Charlotte. How's your day?" he asks me with a smile. Oh, would he like to know...

Just then, all the anger I had towards Brendan went directly towards him!

"Well, let's see: I'm hiding from Laguna and Jonathan because I skipped work, I was forced to do some heavy lifting as my punishment, and last but not least...YOU TOLD BRENDAN THAT I WAS INTO TWILIGHT!" I screamed. I knew I probably just gave away my location to the Coves, mainly Jonathan, but I was too mad at Riley for this.

He paled in front of me, clearly signaling that he was caught. I considered on using my powers on him as payback but I had to use my "Think About Australia" mantra to stop me.

"Now listen..." he started to say as he was backing away from me, but I cut him off.

"No! \_YOU\_ listen to me! I honestly don't know what your game is but I want no part of it!" I exclaim as I stalk towards him, "I mean, first, you act all nice, for a beach boy, then you go off and be a jerk to me not that long afterwards! Next, you practically \_pull\_ me from my job to ask me to be friends with you and now you're acting like a jerk again! Honestly, what the hell is wrong with

you!?"

Alright, I'll admit, I am **\*\*\_waaaayyyy \_\*\***too close to using my powers on him! And if my business is on some worldwide poster, which it is NOT, he had no right to say anything at all!

"P-p-p-lease let me explain what I meant! It wasn't for any crude purpose or anything, but-" he stammered until I cut him off again.

"Any crude purpose?! Brendan is the SON of my BOSS! Did it ever occur to you that he might tell them what I say?!" I exclaimed, "so what on Earth could have made you talk to him in the first place!"

"I wanted to ask you out on a date!" he said quickly.

That stopped me in my tracks, or at least what I was about to say next, which wasn't pretty.

There was silence between us, well as silent as it could get on a beach, and we just stared at each other. Riley, despite how hard he tried, was now blushing beet-red with his hand over his mouth. Probably shocked that those words came out of his mouth at all.

"Excuse me? Am I hearing right? Did you just say you went to Brendan to ask me out on a date?" I asked him, "please tell me this is some sick joke and not the real deal?"

Personally, I wasn't embarrassed. Shocked, yes, but not embarrassed. But I'll admit that aside from Jason's gang, back in Atlanta, there were at least 1 or 2 guys who asked me out only to see if I would say yes and laugh at me afterwards.

Leading reason number 2 of why I don't want to date!

Riley seemed to have broken out of his embarrassment and realized what I just asked.

"What? No! That's not why I went to him! I swear, you two worked together, so I assumed that he would know a lot about you that I could possibly say to get you to go out with me!" he said, "and I just happened to let it slip about the whole Twilight thing."

Now fully calm, I told him "And didn't I tell you that I have no interest in dating and we were only to be friends? Wait no! You practically **\*\*begged\*\*** me to be friends with you and then you avoid me awhile after! Seriously, who does that?"

"Apparently someone who sits at the back of Math class and can't help but stare at you," he said, only to have his eyes widened again and cover his mouth. He only uncovered it to say "You did NOT hear that from me!"

"Well, to bad so sad, BadBoy! I told you once, and I'll tell you again: I will NOT go out with you! In fact, it was just pathetic of you to ask!" I yelled before covering my mouth.

Once again, the old me showed up.

Now it was Riley's turn to be mad. "Excuse me, I'm not pathetic! In fact, you should be glad I asked your bitchy-self out anyways!"

Now **\*\*THAT \*\***struck a nerve there.

Realizing what he just said, he started to apologize. "I-I-I didn't mean it like that, I swear. God, I'm sorry I-"

Too late!

"Oh, you think **\_\*\*I'm \*\*\_**the bitchy one? You've been off your rocker since the day we met, from nice to mean, to apologetic to jerk face, and now from a beggar to to a complete asshole! Now wonder they call you the "Heir"! You carry the aura of a spoiled prince!"

Personally, I felt no pain calling him the "Heir, but his reaction surprised me. I expected him to be mad, but instead he looked like he let down his defenses. His arms slumped, his head down, and, for a second, I was worried in the change of posture.

"Y-y-you know about that?" he asking in a stutter. I honestly didn't think he had it in him.

"About you being called an "Heir"? Yeah, when I told my friend, Alaine, about how we met, she kind of filled me in on what your story was," I said, "I don't believe it, but your tough-guy act and bi-polar-ness now have me second guessing."

Riley looked up at me with sad eyes, which now had me confused.

"I-I honestly didn't think you would find out about that," he said in a low voice.

"So what? This is high school we're in. Stuff like that is bound to be found out. And why does that matter to you anyways? I assumed you were the type to ignore stuff like that."

He was now giving me an embarrassed look and to be honest, I was done with it.

"You know what? I am going to: 1. Stop wasting my patience with you and walk away and 2. Pretend you don't exist for the rest of my live. Sound okay?" I asked in sarcasm.

Alright, now I am just being mean, but if he's going to keep playing these games with me, then he's not worth my time. But in my life, apparently, a lot can change.

I turned around and started walking away from him until I felt his hand grab me and spin me around until me and his faces were just inches apart. Would this be a bad time to slap him?

"Listen, I'm sorry okay! I know that probably doesn't mean much to you and I know that for a friendship to work, there needs to be communication and...I haven't done a good job at that," He admitted.

I pushed him away from me. Really? Communication? Friendship? Has he been talking to a parent or a therapist because he's off his rockers now.



I sighed. "Listen, I have to go. I should have left Paradise earlier but I had to make it up to Laguna for skipping work. Can we have this...conversation another time? I really think this isn't the best place to talk and-"

"CCCCHHHHAAARRRLLLOOOTTTTEEEE!"

Me and Riley jumped and turned to see a raging, like, Hulk-level raging, Jonathan marching towards them. OH GOD!

I looked to see Riley's head was still in Jonathan's direction and, though I **\_\*\*\_know \_\*\*\_**I'm going to get an earful for this, I grasped my hand in the air, turning myself invisible, and ran away like mad.

Just in that moment, I swear I heard Jonathan roar!

This will not end well for me...

I ran to the front of the cafe to see Thomas tied to a post near my bike, looking as miserable as ever, before ducking into the parking lot and became visible again behind a car. Then, I ran back to Thomas, untied him and re-tied him to the bike, put my helmet and pads on before hopping on and speed off the onto the road.

Boy, and I thought Laguna was mad earlier. Now, she'll definitely kill me.

\* \* \*

><p>My mind must have been somewhere because I didn't remember the trip home until I came up my driveway. I hopped off the bike and untied Thomas as I pulled out my phone to call Alaine to tell her I made it home...in a sense. But first, I had to see my mother.<p>

I opened the front door and said "Mom! I'm home!"

I was met with silence.

"MOM!"

It was still silent and I was starting to get worried. I went to the kitchen and found a note on the refrigerator. I took it off, opened it, and read:

**\_\*\*Charlotte,\*\*\_**

**\_\*\*If you're reading this right now, then I know you're home and safe. I left the house for work today, despite it being a Sunday. Someone was out sick and I had to fill in. I might be home for dinner though.\*\*\_**

**\_\*\*Hope you and Alaine had a great time at your little get-together! I look forward to hearing about it when I get home.\*\*\_**

**\_\*\*Love you,\*\*\_**

**\_\*\*Mom\*\*\_**

I sighed as I put the note on the counter.

Honestly, I love my mom but these were just the times when she wasn't home and it bugged me. Yes, she could be great and supportive at times but that doesn't mean it was nice to come home to an empty house. And then I thought about what happened to Alaine last night and it quickly brought me back to what Marana had said.

"\_There's nothing wrong with letting her be like you. You say she doesn't understand the ordeals you went through, right?''\_

I felt a shudder roll down my back as I remembered her that I think about it, they seemed more like a threat than a statement. But Alaine is my friend and my mom is my mother, meaning I have to protect them no matter what.

Sighing, I opened the refrigerator and grabbed two water bottles. I unscrewed the caps and poured one into Thomas's drinking bowl, much to his relief. I drunk the other one as I went into the living room and turned on the answering machine.

"\*\*You have 1 voice mail\*\*," the machine said.

I figured that it was a bill collector or something and went to turn it off until I heard a familiar voice. \_TOO familiar...\_

\*\*\_"Charlotte! It's me..."\_\*\*

LEWIS! It feels like ages since we last talked to each other.

\_\*\*"Sorry, if I haven't been available to you in a while but...let's just say the moon pool over here as been causing some problems. Speaking of which, how's it going over there? I think we need to talk. Bye."\*\*\_

"\*\*Voice mail ended\*\*," the machine said.

Don't get me wrong, me and Lewis are JUST friends (or secret friends at best), but to actually hear from him, let's just say I raced to my bedroom and pulled out my computer.

I logged on and went to Skype and immediately started asking for him.

BING!

Just my luck, it was accepted and in 10 seconds, Lewis's face appeared on the screen.

"You do know that if my mom was the one to listen to the voice mail today, she would have grilled me on why you were calling," I said with a smirk on my face. Lewis rolled his eyes.

"Haha, very funny Char. Now how are you doing?" he asked.

"Oh, pretty good! I just went to the mall with my friends yesterday, beat up a few goons with my powers to stop them from raping me and beating me up, went to the beach, saved my ONLY friend from becoming

a mermaid and did mermaid drills as a punishment for skipping out on work. Nothing much really. How about you?" I asked casually.

Lewis stared at me like I grew two heads, which was the reaction I was hoping for because I always found it hilarious on his face.

"Excuse me WHAT?! Let me make this clear: You used your powers in public, risked exposing your tail, saved your 'ONLY' friend from becoming a mermaid and got punished for missing work," he said carefully. I shrugged my shoulders and nodded.

He gave out funny laugh and said "Well, if there's one thing that won't change about you, it's the fact that you always seem to use your powers whenever you get the chance. Care to explain?"

"Yeah, and- Oh! I almost forgot! I have a new trick to show you!" I said. He gave me a look and nodded as he took a sip of water from a cup he had. I smirk, feeling very rebellious today.

I made my hand into a fist and pulled it into my chest, rendering me invisible.

Lewis's response was hilarious! His eyes bugged out of his sockets, he had to force himself to swallow the water in his mouth to avoid doing a spit tank and dropped his jaw to the ground when he was done. I am not sorry to admit, but I started laughing my head off.

"HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!" I guffawed at him. I must have dropped my hand because I was now visible again but I couldn't help it. I honestly need to shock him more often.

Once I calmed down, sort of, I looked at Lewis, who was now flabbergasted and flustered at the same time.

"Charlotte, when on what time on Earth, have you developed Invisibility as one of your powers?" he asked.

I smiled. "Well, when I was having a lesson with Laguna, she decided to become invisible and surprise me. However, I have another power: Invisibility Detection, which allowed me to see her. She and Karen think I might have inherited this since my grandmother was a mermaid...and this is my second time being a mermaid!"

He gave me a small smile. "Well, to spare me a heart attack, is there anything else you need to tell me?"

I decided to not tell him about my attack from the Water Snake, but I guess he should know what happened over the weekend.

I started with how I got ambushed by Jason and his gang (and the little back story of our first run-in) and how I used my powers to get them away from me and Damon (Lewis nearly had a hissy-fit that I turned into a mermaid) and skipped ahead to how me and the girls got to the beach. By the time I got to the tunnel entrance, Lewis looked like he was having a moment.

"You do realized that you nearly exposed your secret at least 5-6 times, whether you used your powers or sprouted a tail. I swear, if I

was over the-

Lewis stopped when he caught the glare I was giving him, my pretty clear warning to tell him to keep his butt back in Queensland.

"-and all I'm just saying is that you need to be more careful! At least no one followed you when you went in," he said.

I bit my lip and looked away.

"Charlotte, were you followed?" he asked me suspiciously. He gave me a look and I caved.

"My friend, Alaine, woke up and entered as well, but don't worry! I wasn't in my mermaid form, but she nearly became a mermaid because of some type of mind control Marana put on her. BUT we did get out safely!" I blurted out.

"Charlotte, really you need to be-Wait? Did you say mind control?" he asked.

I nodded. "Well, not exactly, but she put me and Alaine under some kind of trance and I nearly allowed myself to let her get turned. She said how I was practically all alone and I needed someone who could understand me. And, to make it worse, I felt that way. Alaine is my best friend, my only best friend aside from Thomas, and I nearly allowed her life to change for my sake! Thankfully, I levitated her off the ground and placed her near the exit but what's wrong with me?! I have I lost it or something?"

' 'There's nothing wrong with you, Char! I guess it's like how the girls handled it, only they had each other to lean on. You, on the other hand, have two adult mermaids and a preteen merboy on your side, but you want someone to lean on as well. **\*\*\_But\_\*\***, I have to say, I'm really proud of you for saving her. Did she remember anything the experience?"

I shook my head. "She remembered going into the tunnel but nothing else. I told her to pass it off as a dream though. And you want to know something, the moon pool collapsed after the moon passed over. To be honest, it's clever. You could trap anyone who didn't come out but once you made it out of the tunnel, it solidifies itself back to rock like it wasn't even there. And then, Thomas managed to grab something from the cave. I don't have it with me now but I could describe it to you."

Lewis nodded, telling me to continue.

"Well, it was an oval, sea-blue crystal. When I held it, it gave off so much power, an evil, sinister power, that I couldn't help but drop it. Ever heard of something like that?" I asked.

He was quick to reply. "Yeah. Remember the new girl I was telling you about?"

I nodded. By now, I had calm down from the whole "Emma replacement" thing, but that didn't mean I wanted to learn the girls name quite yet. I probably will when I know accept it for what it is.

"Well, she wears a similar crystal around her neck. Turns out, Mako

has similar crystals in the cave walls. I believe they were there when the comment, the one which created the pools, crashed and embedded themselves into the wall. She got here's from Ireland though. I believe you found a similar one, only yours belongs to an evil mermaid," he said, the last part sounded weak though.

"So what now? I don't know what to do next. Karen's husband is coming after me for whatever reason, I now need to juggle the fact that I'm lying to my best friend, and also, let's not forget an evil mermaid who now has a moon pool with, possible, a billion crystals embedded in it but also goes into self-destruct mode whenever the moon passes! Let's face it, I'm on my own over here!"

Lewis shrugged his shoulders. "Well, you can't get rid of your tail, though what else do you plan to do? Go through Laguna's spell books and try to reverse the effect or are you planning on taking Marana's tail as well?"

To be honest, he struck a nerve harder than Riley ever will. I know I can't forget that night, but that doesn't mean I'll do it again when I get the chance.

"Oh, so that means that I'm evil myself then huh?"

Realizing what he said, Lewis was quick to try to back up what he meant. "That wasn't what I meant Char! I just mean that you can't get out of your situation no matter what happens! And even if you tried, there would be consequences for your actions and a lot of people could get hurt and-"

"And you don't think I know that! Well, news flash: It has already happened! For example, just the other weekend, I literally just had a giant snake come into my room and try to kill me! And as a result, I now have 3 ugly scars on my back! Tell me, my actions had to have been **\*\*so\*\*** bad that I nearly died. And then, my mother didn't hear the whole thing! You think I was able to sleep with that on my conscious? I knew she was OK afterwards but that still killed me! So tell me Lewis, I already know I need to be careful with what I do but I **\*\*refuse\*\*** to be some pawn in someone's game! I think you're lovely girlfriend and her friends made that kind of clear!" I yelled, crossing my arms.

That must have set Lewis off. "HEY! I'm sorry, but last I check, it was **\*\*YOU\*\*** that lost control! You got jealous and look where that got you, a bitter harpy in the first place!"

"Well, since I will always be the evil one in this, whatever we have, why do you even bother talking to me! I'm pretty sure you've been dying to tell the others about my predicament!"

"Actually, I wouldn't because, unlike you, I actually care! We may not be dating anymore but that doesn't mean we can't be friends! But of course, it's all about Charlotte, always has been, always will be! She'll always care about nothing but herself!" he countered back.

"AND YOU THINK I HAVEN'T TRIED TO CHANGE THAT! I STILL CAN'T SLEEP PEACEFULLY SINCE THAT NIGHT ! I MAY FEEL COMFORTABLE AT TIMES BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I DON'T FEEL GUILTY! I COULD PROBABLY SAVE THEIR LIVE ONE DAY AND EVEN IF THEY DIDN'T FORGIVE ME, I HAVE TO LIVE THAT

THEY WOULD NEVER ACCEPT MY APOLOGY! I HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT OTHERS BECAUSE, NO MATTER WHAT, THEY CAN BE CONTROLLED AT ANY TIME AND IT WOULD STILL BE MY FAULT BECAUSE I WILL BE THE MAIN CAUSE OF IT NO MATTER WHAT!" I screamed. I felt tears coming from my eyes, but I refused to feel weak and shed the last of my pride.

Lewis was calm and quiet for a moment. His face was unreadable but I guess, at the direction we were headed, it was expected.

"So, I guess that if you feel that way, this is our last goodbye huh?" he asked. He said it more like a statement, but it was also question as well.

"I guess it is. It wouldn't be fair anyways to continue talking to each other in the first place," I said. I won't admit it, but I felt a piece of my heart break off, but it was for the best. I had to grow up, and letting go of my past was further proof.

"Goodbye Lewis."

"Goodbye Charlotte. Have a nice life," he said. And with that, he logged off just as I closed my laptop.

I laid my back and looked up at the ceiling. I knew I had not only just took away the closest thing I could get to help from an outsider, but I costed myself a friend. I should apologize for the way I talked but I had a feeling it wouldn't work.

Huh, it's funny how a casual talk ended up with us forever talking in general.

I closed my eyes and was about to go to sleep until I heard my phone ring.

RRRRRRRIIIINNNGGGGGG! RIIIIINNNGGGG-

"Hello?" I asked as I answered my phone. I didn't even bother looking at the caller I.D. to see who it was.

\*\*\*"C-C-Char?"\*\* I heard a teary voice call. I raised myself up as I recognized that voice.

"Alaine, what wrong? Are you OK? Why are you crying?" I asked in full panic mode. I swear if something happened to her...

\*\*\*"L-l-listen...d-do y-you s-still have t-the bike I g-gave you?"\*\* she asked, now on a full-time sobbing.

"Yeah! Did something happen? Alaine? Al, did something happen?" I asked repeatedly. It took a few minutes for her to answer and I was now worried.

\*\*\*"C-can you c-c-come and p-pick me up p-please?"\*\* she asked. \*\*\*"I-I need a p-place to stay for t-the n-n-night."\*\*

Before long, I grabbed Thomas and my helmet, rushed outside to hop onto the bike and rode off with my dog running beside me. Dear god, what was going on today?

\* \* \*

><p><strong>3rd POV<strong>

Alaine had told Charlotte to meet her at Valencia Heritage Park. It took a total of six minutes to get there and by the time she got there, it was 6:30 pm. She had no idea how much time had passed since earlier that morning.

As Char hopped off her bike, she attached Thomas to a leash and started walking around to find Alaine, but it was a big park. Charlotte couldn't help but ask around and look around the playgrounds to find her.

WOOF!

She looked down at the dog and then looked at the direction Thomas was barking at and saw a petite figure sitting down near the picnic tables. Instantly, Charlotte knew it was Alaine.

"Alaine!" she yelled as she and Thomas ran towards her. Alaine looked up at them.

Charlotte smiled in relief as she ran towards her but stopped when she noticed two things wrong when she got close enough.

First off, she had a huge duffle bag beside her on the ground. It was big enough to have at least 4 weeks worth of clothes, she guessed.

The second thing, she was sporting a black eye and a huge bruise on her right cheek. No, it was big enough to the point it was swollen to the point that the whole right part of her face was puffing out.

Oh God, oh God, oh God, WHAT HAPPENED!?

## 26. Can A Mermaid Lose Her Pride? Part 1

\*\*Hello guys! I hope your ready for this new chapter and I hope you like it\*\*\*\*. I'm SO SO SO SO SO SORRY for being late on this! Between being in a summer program and a temporary internship, I lost tack of time! 3-)\*\*

\*\*And for our Mako Mermaid fans who happen to have Netflix, and to the ones in Australia who saw the season finale of MAKO MERMAIDS season 2 part 2B, let's give a standing ovation for Evie being the first land girl ever to receive a moon ring (AUDIENCE APPLAUSE) and the Mako pod finally returns to Mako Island (HUGE STANDING OVATIONS)! \*\*

\*\*P.S. Heads up! We are practically at 130 reviewers and I'm toying with letting anonymous reviewers back into my review section. So I'm just saying that I'm so proud for the people that has been with me with the start and I hope that your with me when I continue into my next stories!\*\*

\*\*Disclaimer: I don't own anything from H2O: Just Add Water and if I did, Charlotte would probably have had her own show or the absurd that was Charlotte's character wouldn't have

happened!\*\*

\*\*ENJOY!\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Charlotte's POV<strong>

I will NOT lie: I was glad to have found Alaine safe and sound.

But when I saw the swelling on the side of her face, I wasted no time running up to her and taking her into my arms. I felt Alaine return the hug as she started to cry into my shirt. Thankfully, I had something under it or else I would have sprouted my tail.

I pulled away and got a good look at her face. It seemed that she just needed to put ice on it so that the swelling went down, but that wasn't what was bothering me.

It was the fact that the bruise looked like someone punched her in the face.

"Alaine, what happened to you?" I asked.

I must have hit a nerve because she started to cry and become a blubbering mess. Now that I think about it, I had a pretty good idea on who hit her and I swore that I would protect her.

"Hey, hey, hey! Calm down Alaine! Listen, I want you to get your stuff and we'll go to my place and I can whip up a batch of hot chocolate! It's my mom's recipe!" I told her in a slight sing-song tone at the end. She nodded and went back to the table to retrieve her stuff.

I looked around the park and noticed that there were barely any people here. And now that I noticed, I also saw Alaine's bike nowhere in sight. How the Hell did she get here? On foot?

When I saw Alaine coming towards me again, she had the bag slung around her shoulder.

"Are you ready?" I asked her timidly.

She just nodded. So, I hopped on my bike and felt Alaine sit down behind me with both feet on the rear axles and grip my shoulders. I looked down at Thomas, who was attached to my bike, looked OK.

"Alright, Let's go!"

It was a little wobbly with 2 people, but once we were on the road, there was no stopping to my house.

\* \* \*

><p><em><strong>At Charlotte's House...<strong>\_

By the time we got there, Alaine, oh-so-dangerously, jumped off the bike and grabbed her bag. She was fast enough to do it or else I would have fallen. I got off and safely walked next to her as we



slowly walked to the front porch.

The sky was getting dark sooner than expected and I felt a breeze from the wind blow past us. I looked at my friend.

Her head was down and her usual aura of happiness that seemed to follow her had died along with it. The swelling on her face had seemed to go down a little on its own, but still needed ice. And from how I saw her eyes earlier, the light in it had died as well. I always thought that maybe Alaine had some kind of eternal happiness reboot button on her, but I would truly be lying if I didn't remember what happened the last time I saw her...with her mom.

When we walked on to the porch, I placed the bike on the side took out the key that was hidden under the doormat and unlocked the door. Thomas made no time rushing inside the house and I watched as Alaine made her way into the living room. I figured she needed a little alone time so I let her be.

I went into the kitchen and made Thomas's dinner first, to his delight, then pulled out an empty ice pack from the kitchen drawer and began to fill it with water. When it was full, I closed the top and, looking over my shoulder, I raised my hand and instantly, the water pack was frozen. After that, I made 2 cups of my mother's famous hot cocoa.

I looked back at the clock to see that my mother would be home soon and I needed to know what happened to Alaine. So, I picked up the ice pack and the coffee mugs and headed into the living room.

The living room was painted with blue walls. There was a book shelf next to the TV and in the middle of the room was a small coffee table on a brown carpet. There were 2 sofas on both sides of the room, facing each other (one on the wall and the other in front of the windows) and at the edge of the room was my mom's sofa chair, where I found Alaine sitting.

I walked over to her and gave her the cup of cocoa and the ice pack, which she accepted gradually. I sat down on the couch in front of her.

"So...what happened? I saw you earlier today and you were just fine. And now, you were practically in tears by the time I got to you! Did something happen?" I asked.

Alaine just sipped her cocoa and kept her head down. When she was done, she slowly put her cup down and pulled the ice pack towards her bruised face. I scooted up closer to her and brought her face up for me to see. I saw sorrow and hurt coming from her eyes and, much to my displeasure, embarrassment? What could she be embarrassed for?

Suddenly, my mind wandered back to that day at choir tryouts. My first glimpse at her mother, the look of pleading in her eyes and now, I know I'm going to have to ask the dreaded question. I breathed in a sharp breath and felt the words roll off of my tongue as I spoke.

"Alaine...did your mom hurt you?"

And like that, she burst out in tears, which held no difference compared to a flood of water bursting out of a well-built dam. She used her hands to cover her face, but the tears just kept coming.

I jumped back a little to avoid her tears landing on me. The **\*\*\_last\_\*\*** thing I needed was to become a mermaid right in front of her. So, instead, I did as my grandmother used to when I was little, and placed my hands on her shoulders and rubbed them soothingly to calm down.

It worked. Within minutes of crying, she calmed down though I knew she had **\*\*\_waaayyy\_\*\*** more tears to let out, but I needed to know what happened.

"Alaine, please, I need to know what happened today. Not that long ago, this morning, you were as happy as larp but now your an emotional wreck! Did something happen once you got home?" I pleaded, "you know you can trust me...aren't we best friends?"

I looked towards the ground and have never felt more ashamed at myself than before. Oh how nice of me to play the "best friend" card, yet I can't even tell her that I'm a mermaid for Pete's sake!

I heard Alaine mumble and leaned my head back up to hear her better.

"Can you repeat that again?" I asked.

"S-s-she w-wasn't su-sup-posed to be home t-today," she whispered quietly.

It took me a minute to realize what she meant. Andrea, I think that was her name, wasn't supposed to be home when she left. But the didn't make any sense. She should have been home in general...right?

"Who? Your mom? What does that have to do with anything? Didn't she know about our little day out yesterday?" I asked. I waited a few minutes until she spoke again.

"No...I never told her at all. She was supposed to be away until Monday," Alaine confessed. She had stopped stuttering and had calmed down to speak in proper English.

"So, you lied to her? Sorry to sound disrespectful to parents everywhere, how is that a bad thing? You just didn't tell her," I said.

"Listen, you don't understand! She-she...I didn't understand how she knew about yesterday. But when I got home, I found her sitting on the couch, drinking a bottle of beer and she had a computer on her lap," she said as she started to cry again, "I asked her what she was doing home so earlier and she turned to computer around and on the screen where pictures from the other day at the mall. I saw that some of the girls must have posted the pictures on Facebook and some where under my name...Oh god, it just got ugly from there. She got up and the first thing she literally did was splash beer on my face and asked me how conceited I was. I told her I wasn't but she wouldn't listen to me and then she brought you up and all the sudden, I got defensive, and...and...all I know was that I was on the floor in seconds and

then I was packing my stuff running out the house and calling you!"

I watched as Alaine returned to a sobbing-mess as she wrapped her arms around herself and started rocking herself back and forth. Against my better judgement, I pulled her close to my body and held her again. There were so many things going through my head that I felt a slight headache coming along. But now I was assured of 1 things:

Alaine's mom is abusing her.

I mean, there was no other option to consider. To be honest, I was stupid enough not to suspect this after I had witnessed her hit Alaine in the girls' bathroom. Part of me felt stupid because I put myself in a bystander position when she obviously needed help. But when she confronted me in the girls' locker room the night I found out I was a mermaid again, it was light she was used to this behavior.

Though it makes sense, seeing as I tried to bottle up my emotions as best as I can for a time before have to let it out.

I pulled away and made her look at me.

"Listen Al, you don't even have to ask. You can stay here as long as you need and after this, you and I can ask my mom to take us to the police station and-"

"Woah, wait a minute!" Alaine interrupted me, "my mom doesn't hurt me or anything. Well, badly. It just went too far today. That's all!"

Now, it was my turn to look flabbergasted. Was she seriously defending the woman that had no problem beating her down when she was angry?

"So what your telling me is that you can to me in blubbering mess and confessed that your mother lost it, yet you don't want to file a report?" I asked in a serious tone.

Alaine nodded. "There's no law saying that the fight was an act of child abuse, which it wasn't, and, besides, it was just a parent disciplining their child. There's really nothing to report."

If that was her way of saying no and stating the facts why, now I could understand. But if she was just defending the woman who raised her and is abusing her, we were going to have some issues.

I was about say something when I heard the front door open and saw Thomas rush out of the room. Then, I heard my mom's voice.

"Charlotte, I'm home! I hope you don't mind if I brought Chinese, your favorite!" I heard her say, "and yes Thomas, I see you, yes I do!"

When she finally came into view, I saw her smile and in her hands was a big, brown bag filled with Chinese food and her purse. However, my mom's smile faded when she saw what was in front of her. Not wanting

to fully explain everything, I got up and said,

"Mom, Alaine really needs a place to stay for a while. She'll be staying in the guest room for now. Will that be a problem?"

I saw my mom eye Alaine and study her features. My guess it was the bloodshot eyes from the crying and how tired she was that made her silently nod, approving of our new house guest. Turning towards Alaine, I held out my hand, which she accepted, and helped her out her seat.

"C'mon, let me show you to your room."

\* \* \*

><p>Later that night, I was sitting on my bed, looking up abuse stories and the California law system with Thomas sitting beside me, when my mom came in.<p>

I looked up at her and sighed. Part of me knew she would want some detail about why Alaine was staying with us and why she looked like she had cried a river as well. To be honest, I wanted to tell her my suspicions, though I felt that I had enough evidence for child abuse as it was, I was going to have to wait for Alaine to come clean herself before I told anyone.

\_\*\*Great\*\*\_, another big secret I have to keep.

"Alright, normally, I would have no problems if you wanted to invite a friend over, believe me when I say this. But what happened to Alaine? When I saw her with you yesterday, she seemed as polite and happy with herself. And though I know a lot can happen in a day, her swollen face and her tear-streaked eyes just say that something all new! So can you tell me what happened?" my mom asked.

I quickly looked to my computer and exited out of any evidence that I was looking at earlier. I didn't need her to go snooping on this when I went to school tomorrow. And don't think I'm lying about this because me and my mom have our own honesty code and allowing her to go through my computer at times goes with it.

I looked up at her and said "I'm sorry, mom, but that's not my secret to tell. To be honest, she called me and I rushed to get her. By the time you got here, I had \_\*\*just \*\*\_calmed her down. All I know is that she needed a place to stay for the night and I'm letting her stay, if you'll let me."

"Of course she can stay, but I know you Charlotte. Before we moved to the States, you were always to yourself and only speaking to me when you needed to. Now, it seems like you only need me when you need parental permission for something. You're 17 going on 18 and you have responsibilities, not only to me but to yourself. And after you graduate, you're going to college and...and...you won't need me anymore. But it seems as if you never needed me at the beginning," my mom confessed. It didn't take me long to see her eyes starting to swell.

Part of me felt like I was going to cry. Not many people know this, but two years and two months prior to Gracie's death, I witnessed my father dying in a dolphin incident. That's mostly the

sole reason why I'm terrified of dolphins majorly, though I learned that not all dolphins are like that.

And coming with being a mermaid, this secret comes with sacrifices. And like the girls, one of them was lying to their parents. I mean, when I lost my tail, I lost every reason to tell her everything, especially about Gracie (that one was practically a family secret). But now that I have my tail back, I was given the responsibility to trust a few people with my secret.

And to make it worse, it was hurting the only only family I had left: My mom.

I quickly leaned in and wrapped my arms around my mom's neck as tightly as I could and I felt her do the same. I had to let her know that I was \*\*here\*\* and that she would always have me. When we pulled away, I spoke.

"Mom, I'm so \*\*so\*\* sorry if I made you feel that way! I...I honestly don't have any excuse for treating you that way. It's just that, it's hard coping with trying to get a fresh start because, I...The truth is that I'm not the person you think I am. I can't always tell the truth but I always have a good reason why, and I know I'm not the perfect daughter but I can try to make you proud. But the truth is that I love you and I don't want us to be apart because of that.

So what if I go to college, whether it's 3 hours from here or 3,000 miles from here, I'll always come back to you, no matter how happy or stubborn I am to admit it. You don't have to worry about me leaving, you'll still have me no matter what."

By the time I was done, I felt tears running down my face and saw the same running with my mom.

I wasn't lying though. I promised myself that I be a different girl than I was in Australia, and that meant trying to make due on my promises. And by cutting Lewis out, no matter how much I might need him, I can at least work out the rest with the Coves.

Now as a daughter to a parent, I had to do my best to be the best as I can be and make my mom proud. Over the years, there may have been some distance between us do to her working and me being bullied for being smart and all, but since this would possibly be my last year living at home with her, I had to make it last.

"I am so glad you feel that way, because, if I had it my way, you would be locked in this house with me forever!" my mom said with a teary laugh. I joined in.

It was nice to have these talks, and I know it may be awhile before I get the chance to tell her the truth but I guess if spending time with the people I care about helps, then so be it.

When my mom got up and left later on, I saw the clock and decided that I needed to head to bed. So I put my laptop away and turned off the lights before getting under the covers.

I won't take what I have for granted anymore than I did before, but as I turned on my side to get some sleep, I realized...

Maybe, just maybe...some deep, sick part of me can't help but be better at something the girls already are: A better daughter to our parent(s).

\* \* \*

><p><em><strong>September 21st, 2009, Monday...<strong>\_

\*\*3rd POV\*\*

When Charlotte woke up the next morning, her nose picked up a few familiar smells.

Eggs. Bacon. Pancakes...with cinnamon?

What on earth was her mother up to? She better not be experimenting again. She may be a chef, but when it came to creating new recipes from scratch, not everything comes out well and tasty.

Charlotte threw back the covers quickly and dashed out of her room. She then went running down the stairs and headed towards the kitchen.

"Mom, please tell me you're not trying to create a new pancake recipe because you didn't listen to me last time and the green bell peppers..." she trailed as she took in the sight in front of her.

Looking back at her, there was Alaine and Annette, both in aprons, with perfectly baked pancakes and sausage in their hands, looking at her with wide eyes. And on the floor, Thomas was eyeing the sausage with what one would call "food-lust".

Alaine turned to her mother. "You tried to cook green bell peppers in pancakes? How well did that turn out?"

Annette shrugged. "Not well, especially if you also add red bell peppers, bananas and egg to it. To be honest, I think it came out as some messy pancake-omelet hybrid instead."

Alaine gave Charlotte a smile and said "OK, now I know I need to be in the kitchen with you if that happens."

"HEY!" Annette exclaimed with humor in her voice.

Charlotte smiled. Seemed that this living arrangement would work out well.

"Alright, since I am practically in my PJs, I'm gonna head upstairs and get dressed," Charlotte said, wanting to give them some alone time and get her bath over with.

A tail and an hour later, Charlotte came down again with her hair in a curly body wave and wearing a purple skirt, white sneakers, and the top, a little joke Charlotte made earlier, was a white shirt with "\*\*THE SECRET SOCIETY OF EX MERMAIDS\*\*" on it.

"Fashion statement much?" Alaine said with a smile when she saw the outfit, "what did Ariel ever do to you?". Charlotte knew that she was

joking and that was the whole point when she created the shirt.

So, she put her hands on her hips with a smile and said "You have no idea and I should probably say the same thing."

Then, Charlotte looked over at Alaine's look. Her black hair was braided into a waterfall and she had on a pink, lace flowy dress that was short in the front and flowed in the back. And as for the shoes, were white gladiator shoes.

Alaine beamed in pride. "Hey, for me, looking this good, everyday, 365 days a year, is more of a goal than a chore."

"Well, unless you want to look good on an empty stomach, then let's eat," Charlotte said with another smile as the two went to eat breakfast.

Turns out that Alaine got up earlier and started to make breakfast when Annette came in. It was revealed that they both loved cooking and were trading cooking tips when Charlotte came in.

However, it was time for them to leave and at Alaine's insistence, they decided to take Char's bike to school.

"You know, you never told me where you got the bike," Charlotte said.

"Oh, it was my old one. I needed a new bike and I sort of had to do some odd jobs to get my new one," Alaine responded.

"Which is where...?"

"At my house."

Charlotte rolled her eyes as she finished adjusting Thomas to her bike and climbed on with her satchel on her shoulder and Alaine, with her floral backpack on her, hopped on right behind me.

"Wait!" Alaine quickly said before taking off and coming back with a helmet, "you honestly think I'd let you go without protection? HA! Then you clearly don't know me!"

Rolling her eyes again, she felt Alaine climb back on and wrap her arms around her before they set off to school.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Charlotte's POV<strong>

Surprisingly, the school day went very well for me and Al. We had class, met up with the other girls, had choir practice since softball practice was cancelled for the day, and I hadn't run into Riley at all.

I found out from Domonique that Damon was grounded for getting involved in a fight, which he didn't blame me for and had said he would do it again if he had to.

\_Yeah\_, \_well\_ \_unless\_ \_he\_ \_wants\_ \_me\_ \_to\_ "\_save\_" \_him\_ \_again\_, \_I'll\_ \_take\_ \_the\_ \_offer\_, I thought.

So before school ended, I called my mom to pick Alaine up while I decided to call Karen and have her pick me up.

\_\*\*RRRRRRRIIIIIIIIIIIINNNNNNNNGGGGGGG!\*\*\_

As everyone left the school building in a hurry, I saw my mom in her car, waving at me and Alaine as we were getting out of the building.

"Are you sure you don't need a lift? I mean, I've never seen the cafe before, well except from the internet, and you need some sleep for softball practice tomorrow," Alaine said to me as we waved over to my mom.

"Don't worry, I have a ride and if I do remember right, you and my mom were talking pollen and all sorts of stuff to do in the garden my mom's planing on trying to start this morning," I said with a smile, "I'll be fine. The worst that can happen is me running into Riley today."

Alaine shook her head. "Wait? He's pinning for you? Still? Why?"

"Girl, I have no idea. We bump into each other once, just once, and since then, he's been trying to ask me out to no avail," I explained.

"And when do you plan on saying yes?' she asked.

"When I really don't have any choice," I said, signaling the end of the topic for now. Alaine had been on my back all day since I first opened my locker and a note fell out.

And here's what it said:

\_ "Charlotte, \_

\_ I know you probably still hate me or at least feel some dislike towards me, but I am determined to get your hand and rush off into the sunset on my trusty steed with you as my princess. So, once again, I \*\*WILL \*\*ask:\_

\_ Will do me the honor of going on a date with me? \_

\_ From your favorite Paradise lifeguard, \_

\_ Riley Byrnes" \_

Not only was the note as cheesy as heck, but did he really call me a princess? Sorry, but no matter what anyone say, there are 3 girls in the land down under who win that title!

And to make it worse, he had the nerve to say that I \*\*\_disliked \_\*\*him! I'll admit that I don't hate the guy, but he's pushed so many buttons already that I feel the urge to freeze him alive!

"Well, at least let him down gently. I doubt you have the inability to make a grown man cry," Alaine said sarcastically with her arms



crossed.

"Are you kidding me? The first time I told him, I let him down gently. The second time, I added a little more force. Now, I'm sorry, but if I have to be a bitch to get the message across, then I have no choice but go with it," I admitted. Riley's persistent is starting to annoy me and part of me is worried that it will be too much.

**\*\*BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!\*\***

We both looked ahead to see my mom honking her horn at us.

"Well, as much as I'd love to see how THAT will go down, I have to go. See you at your place!" my best friend exclaimed as she ran off to the car.

"Yeah, since you're staying there!" I yelled to her.

Alaine turned around right quick, stuck her tongue out at me, and ran back to the car. I watched as she got into the passenger seat of my car before it sped off. It didn't bother me that she had many things in common with my own mother, but I have a feeling that she may get her own bedroom if she keeps this up.

Chuckling at the thought, I went to untie Thomas from his tree as usual and and silently waited for Karen.

Which wasn't that long as Karen pulled up in front of her. I put Thomas in the back seat and took my seat next to the driver's seat before pulling off.

I didn't know what to say exactly, considering that me and Brendan practically blew Jonathan's top off by ditching him and, if Karen and Laguna knew, almost blew my secret by turning invisible in a public place. To be honest, I was worried more about hearing Laguna's Dolphin tongue than doing drill, which I highly doubted I would get to do again.

"So how was your day?" Karen asked the me, her tone as bright and happy as always. This made Charlotte more nervous.

"Um, nothing much. My best friend is staying at my house for awhile and is already best friends with my mother," I said, trying to lighten the mood like Karen.

She laughed. "Really? How? I remember how I used to bring friends home from school and after awhile they stopped coming because they felt my mother giving her annual glare from behind them. And it was creepy furthermore because it similar to those monster shark movies where you think you're alone and then...BAM! The shark comes and eats you alive!"

Karen started laughing so hard that she was snorting at her own joke. And now that I think about it, Laguna did have some pretty scary faces that would make anyone run for the hills. It just so happened that I rarely tried to provoke it and Laguna only needed a reason to use them.

"Well, apparently, by their love for food and cooking, and possibly gardening as well, it seems that school is the only way to keep them

apart," I said with a laugh, "in fact, I wouldn't be surprised if my mom is now considering making the guest bedroom her bedroom now."

"So what's wrong then?" Karen asked me suddenly. I looked at her with wide eyes.

"What makes you think anything is wrong?"

"Easy, your mouth says one thing but your eyes say another. You're not happy about them being together?" Karen asked.

"No no no! It's s not like that! It's just...last night, me and my mom had a little heart to heart last night and she thought that I never needed her at all, but that's not true. I told her that I can't always tell the truth but I have good reasons why and...Karen I need to ask: Is it possible to tell my mom about me?"

Karen nearly stopped the van at that question. She just kept staring at the road, but I knew that "NO" was the answer.

We didn't talk much during the rest of the drive. I knew that being a mermaid and exposing yourself was a huge risk, and not only to yourself but to anyone else who shared the secret as well. But then again, 3 girls in Australia can get away with telling their boyfriends.

But the question still eludes me: Why don't their parents know?

Maybe that's why I strive to be a better daughter so much to my mom. They can't tell their parents because they're afraid of how they'll react, but you can't fear the people who created you, feed you, love you with their whole hearts and expect anything bad from them.

This is my last year in high school and if I'm going repair the damage I put on her, I have to come clean, or at least to the point she knows that everything is not what it seems. I trust her enough with my heart, though I now wished I showed it more often, plus my secret is practically the game changer.

I could live a normal life with the possibility of being caught or I can be studied by scientists and/or be on display in a aquarium.

Like a normal girl, I'll take the one that is great for me!

\* \* \*

><p><strong><em>At Paradise Cove Cafe...<em>\*\*

When we pulled up into the cafe parking lot, I let Thomas out and decided let him roam free for the day. I know I'll get in even more trouble, but I trust Thomas not to get caught!

"You do know the consequences if he gets caught right?" Karen asked me as she watched me take the caller off of Thomas before he ran down the beach.

"Yeah, but I trust him and technically, you, your husband, or Laguna

have to call him in for the pound," I said slyly. Knowing what I was talking about, Karen smirked at me before we entered the restaurant.

By the time we got in, the place was packed as usual and Karen made no problem putting on her work shirt over the maternity shirt she was wearing and started taking her shift as a host. Meanwhile, I made no problem dashing to the back of the restaurant to change into my uniform as well. I clocked in for me and Karen wouldn't be called in as late.

As I came out and started to wait tables, I felt a little uneasy, seeing as I could bump into Jonathan at any given moment. Here I was, out in the open and the guy is pretty much the human version of the Hulk when angry!

Just as I was about to go take orders from another table, I felt someone grabbed my arms and I jumped up in fright...

Only to see it was Riley.

"Don't scare me like that!" I quietly exclaimed before regaining my posture. Of course, rather than the guy I'm scared to see, I'm brought to the guy I'm so annoyed with rather. You know what, I'll take Jonathan any day!

"Sorry if I scared you," he apologized, though I doubted it, "but considering you left me with a raging man yesterday, I'm more frightened than you!"

Though he meant it as a joke, I couldn't help but slap him on the shoulder for it.

"Ow," he said rubbing his arm, "alright, so I may have deserved that but I'm really here because-"

"You're hoping I got the note that you slipped into my locker at school. And once again, I decline!" I said as I moved away from him.

I've been nice more than once, harsh to no return and yet he's **\*\*\_still\_\*\*** pining after me! What was his problem? Couldn't he take a hint?!

"Charlotte, please, I know I've asked you more than once, but now I'm going to have to ask why? Why do you keep on rejecting me 'cause I'm starting to get that there's a whole other-"

"LOOK!" I said in my most menacing voice, practically in his face, "you don't know me and quite frankly, I'm done trying to read you! This has nothing to do with my personal dating life, which I don't have time for, or anything else to put it clearly. I. Do. Not. Want. To. Go. Out. With. YOU!"

Finally hoping my thorough yet harsh words told him to leave me alone, because as of now, I'm done being nice. Walking away from him, I skipped the table I was planning on going to and walked further away from him, keeping the distance as long as possible.

Was I like this back in Queensland? Even if I hadn't been abusive,

Lewis, no matter how nice, would have dumped me so fast for being as needy as hell towards him.

I brought out my pen and notepad, getting ready to serve to costumers in front of me when I heard Riley yell.

"CHARLOTTE WATSFORD!"

Oh boy, he better not be doing what I think he's doing!

I slowly turned around and, as I predicted, there was Riley, in all his glory, standing on top of a table, catching the attention of not only me but the entire fricken restaurant as well! I saw the our "audience" clear path between me and Riley as they waited to see what happens next.

"CHARLOTTE WATSFORD!" he repeated, "I HAVE HONESTLY BEEN UNCARING, SELFISH, AND A JERK TOWARDS YOU SINCE WE FIRST MET IN THIS VERY RESTAURANT..."

Oh man, he's making it sound like he's proposing to me! I can practically feel all the looks behind my back as I did my best to stare blankly at him.

"...BUT AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT, YOU WERE A SPITFIRE AND YOUR ENDLESS FLAME ATTRACTED ME AND BURNED ME AS ALWAYS. MORE THAN 3 TIMES, I HAVE ASKED YOUR HAND IN A DATE WITH ME, BUT YOUR REFUSAL HAS ALWAYS BROUGHT ME DOWN TO MY LOWEST!"

Oh talk about dramatics! Is he seriously doing this?

"NOW, I ASK YOU, WITH ALL THESE FELLOW WITNESSES, WILL YOU \_\*\*PLEASE\*\*\_ GO OUT ON A DATE WITH ME!" he exclaimed loudly, with his hands closed together in a begging gesture.

I looked around and nearly deflated at the sight of the Coves. Karen had her hand over her mouth as she tried to suppress a laugh, Brendan had the nerve to smile like the Joker while recording this entire thing on his phone, Jonathan just held a glare at me, and even Laguna was having trouble looking at this scene with a straight face.

"Riley, this has gone far enough! And as repeated as many times as I said it, the answer is NO!" I shouted.

I saw him falter in his eyes. He really expected me to say yet just like that. Then, he grew a smirk on his face. Oh no.

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE BURNING FLAME THAT HAS PLAGUED ME DREAMS FOR MANY NIGHTS CONTINUES TO REFUSE ME! I LIE AT NIGHT, DREAMING ABOUT HER, FROM HER VOICE TO HER FIRE, FROM HER LONG, SILKY HAIR TO HER GORGEOUS EYES! SHE IS ALL I THINK ABOUT, NIGHT AND DAY! SO I BEG OF YOU, ALL OF YOU, PLEASE LET MY MAIDEN SEE REASON IN LETTING ME COURT HER AND BEHOLD LIFE AS IT IS!"

I literally felt the blood rise to my face as numerous people started shouting things at me.

"C'mon, the guy is begging for ya! Accept the damn thing!"

"He's a keeper! No man has ever done that for me."

"SAY YES! SAY YES! SAY YES!"

"This is something that lasts once in a lifetime. Take it as it is!"

"Just say yes already! I'm starving!"

It was was the numerous voices and shouts the quickly filled the room that drove me to the end of my sanity.

"ALL RIGHT!" I yelled.

The crowd quickly silenced at my voice and I looked up at Riley. This guy better keep his word or else I'm done.

"All right, Riley Byrnes, I will..." I trailed getting my remaining dignity together, "...I'll go out on a date with you."

It got silent now, almost to the point you could hear a pin drop.

I watched him as he started at me in shock, then started to mumble. At first, I couldn't understand it until he dropped to his knees on the table he was on, threw his fist in the air and screamed,

"SHE SAID YYYYYYYYEEEEEEEEEEEESSSSSSSS!"

The entire restaurant burst into cheers and, knowing good and fully well that was face was red, I ran to the back of the restaurant, the staff's changing room, hiding my face. I passed the Coves, only to see Brendan jumping up and down like a monkey while saying he has officially 'created memories' to look at over and over again.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>HAHAHAHAH! I decided to end this here and make it a two-part (bet you're sick of them already) and reply back on your favorite parts and Riley's <em>very<em> interesting proposal!\*\*

\*\*REVIEW!\*\*

## 27. Can A Mermaid Lose Her Pride? Part 2

\*\*Hello everyone! I hope you're ready for this new chapter and thanks for your awesome reviews for the last chapter (AND YES, WHILE RILEY'S GESTURE TO CHARLOTTE MAY HAVE NOT BEEN ROMANTIC FOR HER, IT WAS A HELL OF A LOT FUNNIER FOR US!)\*\*

\*\*And now that I write this, I have some news for you:\*\*

\*\*\*First, a few weeks ago, I was on Twitter and guess what? AMY RUFFLE replied to me about a tweet about Sirena's hair! The actress TWEETED me!\*\*

\*\*\*Secondly for other other news, for those who have Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, we all knew that an H2O mermaid will appear on Mako Mermaids! Personally, I had been all over Twitter either

messaging Jonathan (the creator of H2O and Mako) to get Brittany Byrnes back to reprise her role as Charlotte Watsford or posting tweets to get more people inspired to have her back on the show.  
\*\*

\*\*And now that it's clear that it's Cariba Heine that's appearing, I'm not giving up! So feel free to write a story on what YOU think an episode with her in it would be like.\*\*

\*\*Thirdly, I realized that at the rate of this story, I might go further than 30 chapters, so I decided that my new goal is that I want to reach at least 200 REVIEWS before this story ends!\*\*

\*\*And last but not least, for those who went to my profile and noticed the missing links, apparently FF is going through a whitelisting process and places such as Google is one of them.\*\*

\*\*Now that I got all that out, I must say:\*\*

\*\*ENJOY!\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><em><strong>At the Coves' underground  
cavepool...\*\*\_

\*\*Charlotte's POV\*\*

To be honest, I didn't expect no comments from the Coves after today's events. After all, I had a hard enough time working after Riley's little "display" because people kept asking me what on where the date would be at or why did I keep rejecting him. So let me be honest here: I was ready to strangle Riley after I asked him about the date.

\_\*\*Flashback...\*\*\_

\_I had finished my shift and had changed back into my regular clothes and had walked out of the cafe when I saw Riley about to take his post as the lifeguard. \_

\_Honestly, I can't even express how mad I was after the incident. It's bad enough that the WHOLE cafe now knows my business, but according to one of the waitresses I work with, I will NEVER be able to live this down!\_

\_But being the sensible girl, or mermaid, that I am, since Riley begged for this date, then at least he can tell me when he wants to do this. So, I started a slow pace before I found myself marching towards him.\_

\_"RILEY!" I shouted to get his attention. He turned around and once he caught sight of me walking towards him, he gave me a smug look. Oh, the nerve of him!\_

\_"Charlotte, it's good to see you out and about. Came by to say hello and check up on me, have you?" he asked with a smirk that nearly took all of my control to not slap off.\_

\_ "Really mature, Riley, really mature. Go embarrass me in front of not only the costumers, but my co-workers and my bosses all because you just couldn't handle rejection," I said coldly.\_

\_ He just laughed. "It worked didn't it?"\_

\_ And in response, and for my nerves, I slapped him on the shoulder. Wow, no wonder I've been doing that a lot lately.\_

\_ "Ow, you broke my heart," he said with a mock hurt expression on his face while pretending to rub his shoulder, "but seriously, you finally said yes, so that's all it matters to me."\_

\_ I suddenly felt a slight piece of hope fill me. "So we don't have a date?" I asked hopefully.\_

\_ Riley snorted. "Nope, we are still going out!"\_

\_ And like that, my hope deflated.\_

\_ "Well then. Since I can't seem to talk you out of this, will you at least tell me when and where, and most importantly, what the date is going to be about?" I pleaded. I am done and if he wants to play this game, then I'll let him.\_

\_ I stared at him for a few minutes, awaiting an answer to my question. And all he did was stare back at me, like we were having some type of staring contest!\_

\_ Then, he laughed at me.\_

\_ "To be honest," Riley had said with a cocky grin, "It's a surprise." And with that, he climbed up to his post and started his shift.\_

\_ Leaving me to wonder what exactly I had just gotten myself into.\_

\*\*\_Flashback ends...\_\*\*

And now, I have to deal with this "mystery date" and that's the last thing I need on my unnecessary to-do list!

So after work, if you could call it that, I rode with Laguna, Karen, Brendan, and Thomas (who managed to run around the beach undetected) in the van to their house for my training. On the way, Brendan couldn't keep that stupid smile off his face and Karen kept making small jokes about it by talking about how Jonathan made embarrassing gestures when they started dating. It seemed Like Laguna was the only one who made the ride comfortable by talking about how mermaid training and some new game she wanted me to try to test my abilities.

But apparently, Brendan wouldn't leave my favorite, dreaded topic alone.

"Does this new game have a name? Because I can think of one! It's called "How Many Times Can You Reject a Riley?" The objective of the game is to see how many times you can reject Riley Byrnes for a date until you give in! It's fun for all ages for all Charlotte's

everywhere!" Brendan roared with laughter and I was tempted to strangle him.

So instead, I slapped him on the shoulder and said "Oh, shut it Brendan!"

Brendan stopped laugh and looked at me for a moment before hitting me on the shoulder back.

So I hit him again.

Then he hit me again.

And I hit him again.

And then he hit me again.

We repeated this again and again until we were fighting like two siblings fighting in the back of the car, slapping our hands against each other. Actually, we were like siblings, in a way, fighting in the backseat of a car.

Eventually, Laguna got irritated by the noise we were making and turned around in her seat to face us.

"Stop it you two! You BOTH are too old for this and if I have to stop this car, I will, and you will BOTH walk to the house! UNDERSTAND!?" Laguna yelled while giving us her nastiest glare.

Too frightened by the threat, Brendan and I stopped and sat down in our seats quietly for the duration of the ride.

By the time we got there, I practically snatched the keys from Karen and rushed out of the van to get inside the house. Then I wasted no time firing up the fireplace and entering the hidden entrance to the cave. I knew I was being rude, but I didn't want to hear a Riley comment for the rest of my night.

So here I am, sitting at the bottom of the pool a few minutes later, waiting for Laguna to throw in the beach balls. Turns out Laguna's game was to see how many balls I could lift up into the air using telekinesis and my water powers at the same time. Brendan calls it "The Lift-off".

"Alright, you can come up now!" Brendan shouted. Hearing that, I rose up and broke through the surface of the water for a breath of air.

"Charlotte, the rules are simple. All you have to do is get each ball up into the air by using telekinesis or shoot the balls out of the water. Just keep them in the air for as long as you can and put as much focus and concentration into it as you can. And you can not use your ice powers to help keep the balls up in the air," Karen stated.

"And if I was to drop them?" I asked.

"Easy, you get a mark and Brendan will announce it. And once we tally those marks up, we continue this practice until the marks get lowered. For example, if you drop a ball at least twenty times, then



we will try it again until until the marks are lowered. Make sense?" Laguna asked me.

I nodded. I could do that.

"But no pressure!" Karen interjected, "I don't expect you to do well on your first try."

Leave it to Karen to be the reassured one.

"Alright, start it up!" Brendan exclaimed. Laguna grabbed a beach ball and threw it into pool. The moment it hit the water, I took a deep breathe as I raised my hand.

I watched as a water-like pillar rose out of the water with the ball floating on top of it. I was worried for a second because the ball almost fell over, but it was still rotating on the pill.

"Next ball!" Brendan exclaimed as I heard the second ball hit the water. I slightly turned my head and raised my other hand at the ball. While trying to keep my eyes on the first ball, I managed to catch a glimpse of the second ball floating in the air. I tried to keep my focus for as long I could, but it ended after 5 minutes when the ball that I had floating in the air fell out of my grasp and landed back into the pool with a soft "PLUNK".

"MARK:1," Brendan stated loudly.

"Don't worry Charlotte, this usually takes a lot of practice," Karen said encouragingly. Laguna didn't say anything and just threw another ball into the pool.

This time, I had an idea. I used my water powers to create a bigger and more wider water-pillar rose up from the water with the ball on top of it. Then I moved it over to the first pillar and converged them together. Honestly, my heart nearly stopped when the first ball nearly fell over in the process, but thankfully, both balls ended up rotating themselves and moving around in a circle.

After that, I had used telekinesis to lift the next ball in the air and made the water-pillar expand so that when I placed a ball in it, it went in to the circle. I had made my eyes turn into the direction of the Coves to see their reaction...and boy was it funny.

Brendan looked like he couldn't believe what he was seeing. Karen was wide-eyed about my tactics, but I was surprised that somehow Laguna kept a straight face.

After an hour passed, I had a huge and wide water-pillar in front of me with at least 10 balls in it. I was about to add one more ball in it until I saw the pillar start to boil and soon enough, it evaporated and all the balls fell into the water.

I snapped my head towards the Coves and saw that it was Laguna who melted the pillar.

"What? I wasn't cheating or anything!" I exclaimed with a pouty face. Karen just chuckled.

"It wasn't that, really. It was the fact that me and Brendan never

came up with that idea when Mother made us do it!" Karen said with a laugh. Then, I looked towards Laguna.

"So, as Brendan would put it: You found a loop-hole. I'm impressed", Laguna said, "but that won't stay the same. But the next time we do this, I'll have an obstacle for you and then, you'll have a higher mark."

I was confused. "What do you mean, "The next time"? I was just getting started!"

Brendan snorted. "Yeah, by an hour."

I snapped my head to him and quickly made a small pillar of water and made it spay on him. I had to laugh as he looked soaking wet before diving into the water and resurfacing next to me in his merman form.

"What was that for!?" he exclaimed, trying to look angry. I laughed again.

"Easy, you laughed at me," I tried to say casually. He looked kind of cute when he looked mad.

"Well, I'll give you something to laugh about," he stated as he formed a smaller pillar and sprayed me. But I ducked underwater, grabbed hold of his tail and dragged him down under.

Knowing the water didn't effect him, he twisted and turned until I let go and he decided to return the favor. I guess we went on and on, playfully wrestling in the water for awhile until we resurfaced.

We looked to see both Karen and Laguna giving us amused looks.

"Charlotte, will it kill you to act your age?" Laguna asked me, trying to be stern.

"No offence, but no one acts their age until the day they die. So...Sorry!" I exclaimed happily. Karen just laughed at her mother's deadpanned expression.

"Anyways, I think I should drop you off at home. Somehow, your mother got my number and told me to have you home by 8 for dinner," Karen said.

"But mooooooom, can't she stay overnight?" Brendan whined.

Suddenly, a smirk appeared on her face. "But if she does, she might eat up all the Rocky Road Ice Cream you've been waiting to have."

I saw Brendan's eyes widen and he looked to me and said, rather quickly, "Bye Charlotte! See you tomorrow!" before diving down under the water.

Normally I wouldn't think this, but I seem to have given myself a little brother.

\* \* \*

><p><strong><em>At Charlotte's house...<em>\*\*

After a long drive with Karen after leaving the Coves, I finally felt like relaxing a bit before I got home. But I can't relax. With Alaine making friends with my mom, I'm more worried at how the house looks when I get there than how their getting along!

Then, we finally pulled up onto the driveway of my house. The moment I stepped out of Karen's van, a fantastic aroma hit me and I inhaled it in. From what I smelled, it was garlic bread, pasta with tomato sauce, and...I couldn't put my finger on it, but my guess was dessert.

Dear God, what are those two up to?

After getting Thomas out the van and waving goodbye to Karen as she drove off, we walked towards to front porch, the smelling getting stronger by the second. I still couldn't put a name on the mystery dessert, but my mouth was watering!

Once I grabbed the knob of the door, the door swung open and I was instantly pulled in by a very energetic Alaine!

"Oh god, oh god, OH GOD! You're just in time for dinner!" she said in a hyper voice as she quickly engulfed me into a hug before dragging me to the dinning room. I heard the front door shut behind me, signaling that Thomas closed the door. Another new trick I taught him!

Alright, so far, so good. The living room is still intact, there's no dirt or mud that I though I would see piling in from the backyard (though it could have been cleaned up), so let's see how messy the kitchen is.

Alaine's dragging eventually stopped and she showed me the dining table. And since we had a large table with 8 chairs, I was cuirous to see what she was showing me.

And I had to admit, I blinked a couple of times to see if it was real.

The table was set beautifully. In the center of the table was a vase full of flowers from my mom's garden and on both sides were lighted candles. Somehow, Alaine had managed to convinced my mom to use her good glass plates with nice-looking place-mats under them. Then on the right of each plate was a set of silverware: a knife, a fork, and a spoon.

"Wow, what happened while I was gone?" I asked my best friend.

Alaine smiled cheekily at me. "Well, after we were done gardening, your mom told me how, lately, you guys never sat down for a nice, home-cooked dinner, we'd make our own, with you here as well."

"And just in time too," my mom said as she came into the room with a bowl filled with spaghetti, "Alaine, can you get the bread sticks?"

I looked towards Alaine, who nodded at the request, and she left my

side and went to the kitchen. And a few minutes later, she came back in with a plate filled with at least 6 bread sticks on it. Both of them sat the food on the table.

"Alright, girls, go wash your hands so you can eat," mom said as she took off the apron I hadn't noticed she was wearing. I slightly stiffened at the mention of washing my hands.

So I quickly went to the bathroom, opened the cabinet to find my "no-water" hand-sanitizer and poured some quickly onto my hand and turned on the sink faucet so that Alaine nor my mom suspected anything. After I rubbed it on, I turned the faucet off and left the room.

A few minutes later, we were all seated at the table, admittedly with our plates full of food, and left it to my mom to tell me what happened while I was gone. Thomas was happily munching on his dog food mixed with pasta sauce.

"...so after I showed her the flowers I had picked out to plant in the garden, she was like 'No, no, no, you're a chef for Pete's Sake. I highly recommend that you just plant the blueberries and the flower bulbs so that way the soil can get some nourishment in it. Also, it will last up to October!'" So we ended up getting Garlic, Flower bells, and blueberries for the garden," my mom recounted. It made me happy to see the light in her eyes.

Alaine laughed. "Yeah, plus November is harvest season! So me and Annette do plan on getting more herbs and vegetables to plant before winter hits."

I raised my eyebrow and took a bite out of my breadstick before speaking "And here I was worrying that the house wouldn't be in one piece when I got back. Should I go check out the garden later?"

But honestly, I could tell that my mother had fallen under Alaine's inescapable charm.

They both laughed. "Technically, we aren't done yet. I'll show you later," Alaine said.

And suddenly, my mom whacked herself in the middle of her forehead. "Now I know what I did wrong," she said, looking towards me, "how was YOUR day? I know you probably don't want to hear us talk about gardening and cooking all night."

Actually, compared to today's event's, I'll gladly listen to the differences.

"Well, nothing really happened. I served until dinner rush, washed some tables and stuff like that. Nothin-"

RRRRRRRRRIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIINNNNNNNNNNNGGGGGGG!

All of us stopped and turned our heads towards the telephone. I started to get up, but Alaine had a head-start and beat me to the phone before picking it up.

"Hello," Alaine answered with her usual happy self. But I noticed the

smile on her face start to fall.

"Mom, how did you- really, you expect me to just drop what I'm doing and come home? Is that place even considered a home anymore?" Alaine said, her voice sounding like it was angry.

I couldn't hear what her mother was saying, which I'm not sure is a good thing or a bad thing, but I could hear shouting on the other line.

"NO! Will you please just listen to me!?" Alaine exclaimed over the phone. As I watched her expression, I saw her angry face grow saddened and soon enough, without another word, she slammed the phone back onto the receiver. She just stood there, looking depressed at the phone and I knew something was wrong.

When she finally walked back into the dining room, I noticed the light in her eyes were out. Oh what did her mother say to her?

"I'm sorry, Annette, Charlotte, but I need to be excused from the rest of dinner," she said with a low voice, "Goodnight."

And with that, she walked out of the room and based on her footsteps, she ran up the stairs until we heard a loud "SLAM!"

I quickly got up from my seat as well and turned to my mom. "Sorry, but I need to see that she's OK," I said.

And with that, I wasted no time running up the stairs.

\* \* \*

><p><strong><em>The Guest Bedroom...<em>\*\*

I ran up to the guest bedroom, where my mom had placed her for the time-being, and slowly opened the door. The room was dark, mostly since it was nighttime and I looked towards the bed to see Alaine's figure.

The sight broke my heart.

Though her head was buried deep in the pillows, I could hear her loud sobs and whimpers throughout the whole room. I honestly hoped that her face itself wasn't as torn up as it was when I got her from the park. Though the bruises when down, emotional scars don't.

I walked slowly towards her and gently rubbed her back soothingly, hoping to coax her head from the pillows.

It worked. I kept rubbing her back, but eventually she let me hold her. I adjusted my body so that her tears wouldn't get on me and a tail wouldn't show up unexpectedly.

After a little while, she managed to calm down and look up at me. I turned on the lamp beside the bed and saw her eyes were red and puffy, and the lights were out in her eyes. Looks like I'm going to have to turn them back on.

"Alaine," I was just going to cut to the chase, "what did your mother say to you?"

She started shaking a little bit, but she shook her head furiously, as if to say to herself to get a grip.

"She demanded that I come back home," Alaine stated, no emotion in her voice yet," she kept telling me that she had this big meeting coming up and I needed to help her. And I kept telling her no, that I refused to return to that...place! It never felt like home since I was little, more like a place to stay. And when I just tried to get her to listen... She said that I was her little bitch. That \*\*she \*\*\_decided when I left and came home! She could do whatever she wanted to me because she was the one paying the bills and taking care of me. And that because my bastard father, that's why I'm so manipulative and always wanted attention, and that being the one to take me home from the hospital was one of the most unfortunate events of her life and that I should be thankful that I even exist at all!

How can you say that to your own daughter? Just...how?"

I was asking the exact same thing as I listen to my friend. I may not have been a parent, but it was one thing to want them to come home, but what her mother said had really crossed the line!

Alaine was literally the poster child for "Perfect Daughter" and clearly, she must've have been switched at birth if she ended up with a witch like that for a mother! I looked at Alaine's eyes, and her light still hadn't come on.

Suddenly, I had an idea!

I left Alaine's side for one minute and left the room. And when I came back, I had my journal and my guitar with me and sat back down beside her.

"You know, when I first wrote this, it was the day I got this journal. I wrote it because I felt sad and depressed and I felt that a lot because of before I moved here. And then," I looked at Alaine, "I met you...and you inspired me. The song is called "You're Not Alone" ."

I gently ran my fingers through the guitar strings before I started to play.

\_Life doesn't tell you where to go\_

\_Or who you're ever going to meet along the way\_

\_Life doesn't ever you \_

\_Or decide which path is truly yours to take\_

\_But who am I to question \_

\_My faith\_

\_My heart \_

\_My love\_

\_Sometimes you just got to stand up and believe \_  
\_That you'll be okay even if it's not right away\_  
\_Oooh\_  
\_And I'll show you\_  
\_That no matter what\_  
\_You're Not Alone (x4)\_  
\_And I'll be standing there with you\_

I took a moment to look at Alaine and I saw something stirring in her eyes. Now, to sing the next part.

\_You are brave\_  
\_You are strong\_  
\_And you know who you are\_  
\_Your light's bright\_  
\_So bright\_  
\_You can light up the room\_  
\_With that smile\_  
\_But sometimes you just got to stand up and believe\_  
\_That you'll be okay even if it's not right away\_  
\_Oooh\_  
\_And I'll show you\_  
\_That no matter what\_  
\_You're Not Alone (x4)\_  
\_And I'll be standing there with you\_

I could practically feel a smile on her face before it even appeared. There was a spark in her eyes, but it seemed like I had to fuel it some more.

\_When you need a shoulder to cry on\_  
\_You know that I'll be there \_  
\_Wherever\_\_, whenever\_  
\_When it feel like the weight of the world\_  
\_Is too strong\_  
\_I'll carry it with you\_

\_When darkness comes out and tries to conquer your world\_

\_You'll never have to think about it\_

\_'Cause I'll be there to help you see it through\_

\_You're Not Alone (x2)\_

\_Ooooooh\_

\_You're Not Alone! (x4)\_

\_Ooooooh\_

\_You're Not Alone...\_

When I had finished the last note, I didn't even have time to register it until I felt Alaine's arms squeezing me like an octopus. But I liked it, even if it meant that I managed to put a smile back on her face. I tightly returned the hug and I heard her softly laughing.

When we pulled apart, my inside was doing a little happy dance when I saw the light fully return to her eyes.

"Char, that was...AMAZING! And you wrote that yourself?" she asked in surprise as she found the song in my journal and looked over it, "you clearly are outdoing me in the musical department, I'm sorry, but it's true! Please stay with me through choir, I need you!"

She looked up and started to give me her infamous puppy-dog eyes and I shook my head. Only she can go from sad and depress to happy and energetic in a matter of minutes. This crazy girl...

I sat my guitar down. "Trust me, this was written on my bad day. It's not worth the time of day anyways. But it feels good to finally get this out, considering how my day went..."

Alaine looked at me like a child eagerly engaged during story-time.

"\_OOOH, \_tell me!" Alaine said excitingly, " what happened!?"

I laughed at her energetic facial expression and proceeded to tell her how Riley embarrassed me at work and how I \*\*\_finally \_\*\*gave in to his demands for a date.

Her expression was funny and then she started squealing like a little school girl! She stated, no, \_proclaimed, \_that she was going to find me the perfect outfit for my date and I almost didn't have the heart to tell her how it was a "surprise date".

But that even got her more excited and I guess we spent the rest of the night talking.

And that's when I realized:

Not only did I have a best friend, I think I have a sister as well.



\* \* \*

><p><strong>And that's a wrap for today people! I hope you enjoyed this chapter and sorry if my AN at the top was too long, but I felt that since I was <em>REALLY <em>late on updating this past summer, I owed it to you.\*\*

\*\*And in case you guys were wondering about the song and trying to look it up, I just wanted to tell you guys that "You're Not Alone" was an original song written by...ME! I'll admit, I was inspired by Rachel Platten's "Fight song" and Taylor Swift's "Fifteen" and felt that this would make a good song to have Charlotte sing to Alaine. Will I add more original songs? I don't know, but tell me what you think!\*\*

\*\*READ&REVIEW!\*\*

## 28. Camping on Channel Islands Part 1

\*\*I'M VERY, VERY, VERY, VERY, VERY, VERY, VERY, VEEERRRRYYYYY SOOOOORRRRRYYYYY that I've been getting sloppy. School's been HECTIC AS HELL but I hope you'll bear with me. Plus, I'm a sophomore, so I get hard work.\*\*

\*\*And I've seen that you guys have been waiting patiently. And I've seen the stats for view and visitors that this story gets, and to my surprise, my last chapter had 51 viewers and 39 visitors!\*\*

\*\*THAT'S NEARLY CLOSE TO THE AMOUNT THAT READ "CHAPTER 1"! ("Chapter 1 being the very first page of this story, explaining what this Charlotte story would be about.）\*\*

\*\*So, let's see if I can do it again!\*\*

\*\*P.S. This chapter is one that I've have been dying to do since the H2O episode! \*\*

\*\*Hint: What is Charlotte's biggest fear?\*\*

\*\*ENJOY!\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><em><strong>September 26th, 2009, Saturday...<strong>\_

\_\*\*At Charlotte's house...\*\*\_

\*\*Charlotte's POV\*\*

You know, I learned a long time ago that promises were sacred, nearly as much as secrets are. And no, my current situation has nothing to do with this! I just so happen to be walking proof of how valuable both promises and secrets are.

So tell me: Why oh why did I decide to agree to go camping with Alaine...on a island of all places?!

Don't see the problem? Well, it started out like

this...

**\*\*\_Flashback...\_\*\***

**\*\*\_September 23th, 2009, Wednesday...\_\*\***

\_Me and Alaine had just walked into the school building, well more like strutting in really. I had let my dear best friend take a look into my closet and the next day, she made me take out my savings from the restaurant and took me out shopping.\_

\_Alaine wore an orange off-the-shoulder top with a white tank top underneath, a white pair of leather shoes, a brown rope-belt, and a orange flower crown to go in her long curled-up hair, along with a few brown-roped bracelets.\_

\_I, on the other hand, wore a sleeveless, paisley-print, tie-up shirt with a dark magenta, lace skirt with a pair of flats with black polka dots. My hair was in a bun with a black headscarf with white polka dots on it. This leads me to believe that I should never allow Alaine to have too much fun picking out my clothes, no matter how good they look on me.\_

\_"Why do I get the feeling someone's watching me?" I asked her as we made our way to the lockers. No matter how beautiful my mother tells me I am, there will always be a part of me that is slightly insecure of my looks, even if I do admit I look gre\_\_at.\_

\_Alaine laughed at my expense. "Char, you really have no idea how gorgeous you are, don't you? That feeling you're getting is the attention of the male population at school! I know **\*\*I\*\*** look good, but the clothes I picked out plus your height **\*\*plus\*\*** your beauty **\*\*equals\*\*** some hot guys coming your way in the future."\_

\_I glared at her for the logic. If having Riley after me wasn't enough, random guys coming up to me and trying to talk to me was **\*\*waaaaaayyyyyy\*\*** out of proportion.\_

\_"Honestly, Al, you are sometimes the most unbearable girl on the planet."\_

\_"Yeah, but you love me too much to let me go, so suck it up!" Alaine said cheerfully. I could only chuckle at the small happy dance she was starting do.\_

\_"So is that why you want me around? To make sure I keep you from becoming a hermit?" I asked teasingly. She looked at me, this time producing a glare of her own.\_

\_"Oh, very funny, why I \_\_outta-"\_

\_"Hey Charlotte!"\_

\_Me and Alaine turned around to see Damon, Domonique's brother, right behind us. I learned earlier that though he went to a different school, he was his sister's ride on the way here. I was thankful to see that the bruises he had gotten from the mall had disappeared.\_

\_"Oh, hey Damon, I see the bruises are gone," I said cheerfully. He

smiled sheepishly and scratched the back of his head nervously.\_

\_"Thanks, though as expected, my mom blew her top when she found out though. But I think telling her that I was defending you eased on her," he said.\_

\_"OH! Damon!" Alaine exclaimed excitedly, "do you think Char's beautiful?"\_

\_"ALAINE!" I exclaimed, smacking her on her shoulder. Did she really have to put that out there!\_

\_"Not really-"\_

\_"Why thank you Damon-"\_

\_"I think she's gorgeous!" he said with a gleeful smile.\_

\_"And I hope you burn in hell, Damon," I said sourly at him while Alaine was giving me a look. I started to turn away but he gently grabbed my arm and looked towards Alaine.\_

\_"Excuse me, but do you mind...?" he trailed, probably hoping that she got the message. And unfortunately for me, she did. She gave me a smirk and walked off from us.\_

\_I took a deep breath. "Yes Damon?" I asked. He looked at me all nervous and took multiple breaths before asking,\_

\_"Well, I know our first meeting didn't turn out well, but I figured that if you were free sometime, that maybe we could go out to a movie or something?"\_

\_Behind us, I heard a range of giggles coming from Alaine, who I have enough knowledge to know will talk my head off about this.\_

\_But let's explore my options here:I have an already busy schedule being a reincarnated mermaid who works and then goes to training until dinnertime, I practically have softball practice and choir a majority of the week, and add in the unknown mystery date with Riley who literally gave me no choice but to accept! \_

\_So call me a hypocrite, but I'm tired.\_

\_"Sure, but I don't know when I'll be available," I said. Call me crazy, but this is technically the first time someone sincerely has asked me out and if Riley gets mad, well I'll be damned!\_

\_Damon gave me a graceful smile, with his teeth showing, and pulled out a small piece of paper from his pocket and handed it to me.\_

\_"Don't sweat it, you're not the only one that's busy. Give me a call and we'll work out the rest." \_\_I smiled at him.\_

\_ "Sure!"\_

\_He smiled at me one last time before walking away. I turned around to see a very happy Alaine grinning so wide I was sure it wouldn't

fit her face. \_

\_She squealed "See! You're already getting dates and they're eating right out the palm of your hand! Though I'm surprised Damon hadn't asked you out sooner or Riley wasn't just 'randomly' walking by slow enough to hear you two."\_

\_I looked down at the paper before opening it to see Damon's number. "I highly doubt it was either of the two. He was grounded, and last I checked, dating was under the list of things you can't do under punishment."\_

\_"So, are you going to go out with him?" she asked me.\_

\_"To be honest, when I get a free schedule, yes. But if I know Riley by much, when I do, the he'll use that as our date," I admitted. So two dates from two guys, one who seems nice while the other is a jerk. These are the times I wonder what luck I have in my life.\_

\_Alaine laughed at my dilemma as we got to our lockers.\_

\_"Who knows, if our God favors you, you can probably be one of the women who has multiple husbands. You'll be living the dream!" she said with a laugh, which resulted in my playfully hitting her.\_

\_As we opened our lockers, I noticed a card fall out of Alaine's.\_

\_"And you say I'm the only one attracting a guy's attention," I teased. She stuck her tongue out at me before picking it up and reading the cover.\_

\_"\*\*\*A picture is worth a thousand words, so what does this picture say about you\*\*'," Alaine read with a smile before opening the card and pulling out a picture.\_

\_Only that smile turned into a deep frown as she took it out. Feeling my "big sister" senses going off, I stood next to her and looked at the picture.\_

\_I wanted to burn it on sight.\_

\_Though it wasn't personally up close, I recognized the picture. It was the day I found Alaine at the park.\_

\_However, the picture was close enough to see how broken she looked, the tears in her eyes as well as the bruise. Alaine turned the picture around and read\_

\_"\*\*\*Sometimes it's better to be alone than be with anyone else. There's no one else to tell you your pathetic better than yourself oxoxox Willow& Tessa!\*\*\_\_'"\_

\_That's it!\_

\_I ripped the picture from Alaine's hands and tore it up piece by piece. It's one thing to abandon someone, but to constantly remind them of that sickened me to no end. I have to live with what happened in Australia, but anything similar I won't tolerate!\_

\_I'll make sure to get back at those two when I can!\_

\_I looked at Alaine, who was actually shocked at my brief action. What? Did she really want to keep a reminder of that?\_

\_She looked at me and said "Now I now better than to make you mad."\_

\_Ha! If only she knew what happened last year...\_

\_"I'm sorry, but that just made that note just...I don't even know how to explain that. But now, we need to do something. And me destroying the evidence was bad enough," Charlotte said, rubbing the back of her neck.\_

\_Alaine just shook her head sadly. "Just forget about it..."\_

\_"Shut it!" I exclaimed, "I know you too well by now. You'll try to brush it off like it's nothing and then when your alone, you'll cry your eyes out. So tell me what I can do to prevent that!"\_

\_Alaine looked at me wide-eyed before taking a moment to think about it.\_

\_Then she spoke "Well, how about..." \_

\*\*\_Flashback ends...\_\*\*

Now that I think about this, she probably planned this for awhile and I gave her the golden opportunity!

Now here I am, in my bedroom, finishing packing a bag worth of overnight clothes and a sleeping bag. I honestly hope that there is some higher being is in my favor because I wish that I might not have to go into my mermaid form during the trip. Because if there's a God, then he knows my luck with camping trips.

I shuddered at the memories as a shiver went through my spine.

"Char, are you ready yet?!" I heard Alaine exclaim loudly from the other side of my door. I shook my head as I heard the hyper-activeness in her voice. I knew Alaine was a nature girl, but I swear if camping is the only thing that makes her happy, then she's going to be the death of me.

"I'm heading down there now!" I yell as I grabbed my camping bag and left the room.

When I got downstairs, I found Alaine setting breakfast down on the table while, from a distance, my was preparing our lunch for the overnight trip.

She wanted to come as well, but since dogs weren't allowed on the camp sites, hence why Thomas wasn't coming, she decided to stay behind to watch him.

"Morning Char, are you ready for the ... .Ever!?" Alaine asked in an over-excited mood.

And me playing the older sister role to her, simply stated "No, and personally, you conned me into this."

Alaine snorted at my comment and stated "Well you did say '\_So tell me what I can do to prevent that!\_'. So in my defense, you brought this on yourself when you wanted to cheer me up!"

"And I regret it deeply," I said as I sat down at the table.

"Party Pooper!"

"Nature Freak!"

"Buzz Kill!"

"Screech Queen!"

I heard Alaine give an over-dramatic gasp and the next thing I know, I feel her wrap her arm around my neck and held it there tightly.

"Take it back, take it back, take it back!" she chanted as she held my neck. Though she knew I was joking, she still found the name I picked out rather insulting.

"N..N...Ne...Ve...Ne...Never!" I choked, trying to break her grip from me. And if I didn't, I'm pretty sure she would end up choking me.

"Alright you two, break it up! I swear, it's like having two children with you!" my mom said as she came into the dining room with a small cooler which I assumed was our lunch.

Laughing, Alaine released her grip on me.

"But seriously Char, you act like camping is some big, bad omen for you or something," she said as she took a seat and started to eat breakfast, pancakes to be specific.

"It's not an omen, per say, it's just that nothing good happens when I do go camping," I replied.

"Oh come on, you spent the night with me and the girls at the beach and nothing happened!" Alaine retorted.

\_No, nothing happened, except I found the artificial moon pool that turned me into a mermaid again and you nearly got turned as well! \_I thought in my head.

"Yeah, but that was different. I've mostly gone places with jungles and stuff like that-"

"Only once!" my mother interjected.

"Yeah, but still, we're on a more open island, so I don't want to take any chances," I stated before I took a bite of my food.

"Speaking of islands, have you too decided where you're going?" my mom

asked. She was skeptical about me going off somewhere completely foreign without adult supervision and she couldn't get there fast enough in case something went wrong, but she trusted us.

Plus, dogs weren't allowed on the ferry, hence why Thomas couldn't come, so she's watching him.

Alaine started to explain "We decided to go on the Channel Islands National Parks. We specifically picked Santa Rosa Island because it has great wildlife, beautiful scenery, hiking/backpacking trails, and a lot of fun stuff to do. We would go to the beach, but Char refuses to anything water related."

I felt her glaring at me and looked up before defending myself "Hey, I told you that you could go snorkeling, kayaking or whatever, but I wanted nothing to do with that!"

Alaine was about to answer me back, probably with a smart-aleck comment, but my mom stopped her.

"Alright, alright, so you have disagreements about what you want to do," mom intervened, "but give me some insight on how you're getting to the island."

"Alright, so the drive from her to Santa Barbra is and hour and a half and the ferry, based on the schedule I printed out, should take at least 3 hours. After that, me and Char are going to settle at one of the camping sites. After that, we may start hiking around and take pictures of the wildlife, or in Char's case, sketch them, and if we make it to the beach, have lunch there. And if we still have time to kill, and I have my way, we can just chill out there and I can go snorkeling. By nightfall, we'll head back to our tent and sleep it off until tomorrow," Alaine concluded.

Even my mom was surprised by our planning. "Alright, since you know what your doing, stand up so I can see you two."

We all got up from our seats and mo looked at our wardrobe attire. Alaine was wearing a simple blue t-shirt with shorts and sneakers. I was wearing a t-shirt as well and jeans. I also added a jacket since I learned how windy it could get during the ride.

"Alright," my mom approved, "now, you got your clothes?"

"Yes," we both said in sync.

"Swimwear?"

"Yes."

"Towels."

"Yes."

"Cameras?"

"Yes."

"Your leisure things?"

"Yes."

"Sunblock?"

"Yes."

"Bug spray?"

"Yes."

Money and the boarding passes?"

"Yes." Alaine took care of those things with care.

"Your phones in case of emergency?"

"Yes."

"And I packed your lunch and placed it in a small cooler to carry easily. Understand?"

"Yes."

"And a rape whistle?"

"Yes mo- Wait a minute? A what?" I looked in her in shock.

She gave me an impassive look. "What? Two young girls alone on a trip together, anyone would try to take advantage of you and-"

"MOM!" I exclaimed, "just trust us! I'm almost 18 years old. You don't have to worry about us like you're sending us on a mission to our deaths. It's just an overnight trip. You'll see us tomorrow!"

Perhaps I was too harsh, but she can't keep babying me forever. Plus, I have powers now. No one will \*\_dare \_\*\*lay a hand on Alaine on my watch!

I watched as my mom sighed and hugged us both.

"Can't blame me for worrying. My baby is leaving the nest," she said with a small smile.

I blushed at her wording and remembered the talk we had those nights ago. "Sorry mom, but I promise that we'll be safe and sound."

My mom hugged us again for a little longer and I couldn't help but notice how Alaine practically fell into my mother's embrace. And I knew the reason why.

\*\*(Written by Return to Neverland, edited by ME!)\*\*

\_\*\*At Channel Islands' National Park Ferry Service... \*\*\_\*\*(Made that up since I couldn't find a name!)\*\*

\_\*\*2 hours later...\*\*\_

"Hurry up Char! I don't want to miss the boat!" Alaine shouted at me



as we both exited my mom's car. There was slightly heavy traffic, so the car ride took longer than expected.

Racing ahead of me, as I said a quick thanks and goodbye to my mum as she drove off.

"Wait up Alaine! The boats isn't leaving yet!" I called out, as I raced to catch up to my energetic and paranoid sister.

After Alaine's mother called her last week and practically told her she regretted ever giving birth to her. I knew that she meant more to me then just being my best friend. We were sisters, family. And family doesn't let the ones they love get treated like she was.

That's why against everything sane I agreed to go on a trip with Alaine to the Channel Islands National Park. On a boat!

Which is now why I am currently getting hounded by Alaine to "get my tail moving!"

Hahaha, I had to suppress a laugh at her choice in wording.

We finally made it to the dock where we were to be boarding the boat, when she finally stopped her paranoia of missing the boat.

"There," I chuckled as we sat our stuff down, "we're here. You can stop stressing now that we're not going to miss the boat."

Alaine let out a sigh. "I know, I know. But I'm just so excited, my mom never let me do things like this."

A frown then fell over Alaine's at the mention of her mom. I went over to her and wrapped my arms around her in a great big hug, trying to cheer her up.

"Hey, don't worry about her. We're here to have fun and that's exactly what we are going to do," I smiled at her.

"Your right. We are going to have a fantastic day with just you, and me. And NO psychotic, bitch of a mother!" She exclaimed.

"And no Rileys," I added, which was met with a series of giggles from Alaine that I joined in on.

Now all I had to worry about was being accidentally splashed from being water bound on a boat.

\_\*\*Just great\*\*!\_ But at least it made Alaine smile. But that was the whole point of this trip: to help Alaine forget about her bitch of a mother.

No matter how much I disliked this trip.

"Now how about you get on the boat I'll be up in a minute. I just need to make a quick pit stop at the bathroom."

"Okay. See you in a sec!" she smiled before skipping onto the ferry, her tie-dye bag swing along with her as she grabbed our stuff and boarded the boat.

I quickly went to the single restroom locking the door behind me. After relieving myself, I made my way to the sink to wash my hands when my phone started to ring. I checked the caller ID only to see an unknown number. I wonder who it could be?

"Hello, Charlotte speaking. Who is this?" I asked.

"Hello Charlotte speaking. It's your one true love speaking!" a male voice answered in a sickly-sweet voice.

What the Hell!

"Who is this?" I exclaimed. My mind was 60 mph trying to find out if this was prank call and not who I think it is!

"Oh, no one, just a sexy lifeguard, who has a thing for beautiful Australian waitresses," the voice answered. I froze and my eyes widened.

Oh no.

\_Oh no.\_

\*\*\_Oh no.\_\*\*

\*\*\_OH NO!\_\*\*

"RILEY!" I yelled into the phone.

"Took you long enough. You know I'm surprised you didn't realize it was me. I thought you wouldn't forget the sound of my voice. I'm hurt Charlotte," Riley replied, with a mock tone of hurt.

I let out another groan of annoyance before placing my phone I between my shoulder and my cheek so that I could wash my hands quickly, and more importantly, dry them quickly.

"How did you even get my number? You little stalker!" I exclaimed. It seems I spoke to soon when I said "no Rileys" before.

"I have my ways and means," he teased. I swear, the next time I see him, I'm slapping him!

Why does he have to be so persistent? I don't have time for him right now.

"Brendan gave it to you, didn't he?" I groaned. It really is like having an annoying little brother with him. The little...Uuuggghhh! Giving Riley my phone number, oh he is going to get it when I see him on Monday!

Before Riley has time to answer I turn the tap on to wash my hands and get sprayed in the face and all over with water.

"Oh great," I said, and twenty seconds later, I'm on the restroom floor in my tail, "OUCH!"

"Charlotte are you okay?" Riley asks, clearly concerned.

"Yep just fine," the sarcasm evident in my voice. I turn to see my tail, flipping it like a fish out of water. Huh, I'm full of puns today aren't I?

"Look I've got to go Riley. Bye!"

"No wait Char-" but I don't get to listen to the rest of what he has to say, before I end the call. Now time to dry myself before I miss the boat.

I curled my hand up and quickly dried myself before bolting out of the toilet, running as fast as my feet could take me. I made it to the docks, and saw the ferry sailing off into the distance.

Now that's just bloody wonderful! Stupid bladder, stupid broken tap, and most of all, stupid Riley! Now what am I going to do?

And then it hit me. I had a tail for Pete's sake! And it's a good thing I left my stuff with Alaine and I got my phone water-proofed!

I looked over my shoulder making sure that nobody was looking my way, then I jump off the pier and into the ocean.

\* \* \*

><p>I swam at full speed trying to catch up to the boat. I knew I had 3 hour until we got to the island, but I wan't stupid enough to pop up out of the water where people could see me. Nope, Jonathan would have my head for that!<p>

So when I felt I was a safe distance away from it, I finally let myself rest and take in the beauty of the ocean around me.

It was truly amazing. Not even pictures could capture this!

The ocean was nearly crystal blue, I couldn't count on my fingers how many different types of fish I saw swimming past me, and I could see the kelp forest below me, and I couldn't help by being reminded of a certain jungle.

Despite that it was open water, I'm pretty sure it was the most beautiful site I've ever seen. I could hear whales singing in the distance, just like Brendan taught me. And if I know Alaine, she's probably gawking at whales while muttering about how they might be come endangered and etc, ect.

It was the most amazing feeling since...ever. I hadn't gone swimming like this since I got my tail back. Nothing could ruin this. No mermaid lessons, no immortal mermaid trying to end the world, not even Cleo and the girls could ruin it.

I swam leisurely through the kelp forest, carefully keeping tabs on the ferry at all times from below. It was so relaxing.I decided to go to the surface for air.

That's when I heard the most frightening sound known to man. A sound that stopped me in my tracks, or fins.

A Dolphin!

I was frozen with fear as I saw, this can't be happening. First Riley calls, then I get water on me and grow a tail in the bathroom, then I miss the ferry. And now I'm about to be murdered by a dolphin.

Maybe if I start swimming it'll go away. So I start swimming as fast as I can in my state of panic. Which isn't very far because I'm practically paralyzed with fear.

Oh god now it's following me! Jumping in and out of the water, pretending to be playful before it attacks. Ughh, now it's showing its fangs before it bites me. Then it dives down and grabs a shell from the ocean floor.

I make my way to the surface, hoping that it will deter the thing from coming any closer. I was wrong.

The little creature pops up right next to me. The shell in its mouth, then it opens up its jaw and throws the shell. I close my eyes. This is the end. Goodbye cruel world, it seems only fitting I leave this world the same way my father did. I can see the headlines now:

\_"\*\*"MERMAID WASHED UP ON SHORE. PROBABLE CAUSE OF DEATH: KILLED BY DOLPHIN!"\*\*\_"

But then...nothing happened.

I scrunch my nose up and slowly open up one eye. The dolphin is making clicking noises in front of me, nudging a shell towards me with its nose.

Huh, it's not trying to eat me?

I eye the beast off before hesitantly grabbing the shell and throwing it away from me. The dolphin swims, and clicks away merrily before grabbing the shell and throwing it back at me. A smile graces my face, before I create a water bubble, softly solidifying it with my new power, which Lewis un-creatively calls Bella-Jelly, after the new mermaid the girls had let into their circle.

Using my powers, I then throw the ball out into the water. The dolphin swims quickly and catches it in his mouth, before throwing it back.

I let out a laugh, who would have thought that out in the middle of a kelp forest I would be playing catch with a dolphin? After years of fearing the creatures, because 1,000 to 1 attack that killed my father. And now I've finally gotten over my fear.

After dissolving the ball, my new dolphin friend and I begin making our way towards the ferry that has begun to dock into the ferry terminal. Seeing a secluded beach nearby, I take hold of my new friend's dorsal fin and he rockets me to shore.

As soon as I get on dry land, I used my heat powers to dry myself off before running towards the ferry terminal.

I make my way through the crowd, and find Elaine by her tie-dye bag and our stuff. She notices me quickly and pretty much tackles me to

the ground.

"Charlotte! Where the hell have you been. I've been looking everywhere for you!" she shrieks. I couldn't help but laugh and push her off me before we got back on our feet.

I decided to play it cool. I can't have her catching on to anything, so I lead her out of the terminal and make our way to the campgrounds near the beach. I explained that I was looking everywhere for her and that Riley's call had distracted me.

"Well next time, you can wait to use the bathroom on the ferry so that I don't lose you!" she exclaims.

"Don't worry, I won't let you out of my sight either," I chuckle.

"Sure, because I'm the one that went missing,"Alaine retorted until she looked behind me and squealed, "wow, look at that!"

I turn to see a dolphin doing back flips and tricks right in front of us. My dolphin.

"Looks like we made a friend!" Alaine states.

"Yeah, it looks like we did," I smile.

## 29. Camping on Channel Islands Part 2

**\*\*Hello people! For those far and wide, I don't know how to apologize for my near 4-month absence! I know for my readers, I also wish you guys a Christmas, New Years, Valentines , and Saint Patrick's Day!\*\***

**\*\*I know that my lateness is inexcusable, but I've been emotionally drained by the place we call High School and my chemistry class has been sucking the life out of me! Also, due to failing Geometry, I was kicked out of Creative Writing JUST to take Geometry again!\*\***

**\*\*Also, I just turned 16 not too long ago, so feel free to write me anything as a belated birthday present!\*\***

**\*\*So please forgive me and...\*\***

**\*\*ENJOY!\*\***

**\* \* \***

**><p><em><strong>Previously...<strong>\_**

**\_ "I'm sorry, but that just made that note just...I don't even know how to explain that. But now, we need to do something. And me destroying the evidence was bad enough," Charlotte said, rubbing the back of her neck.\_**

**\_Alaine just shook her head sadly. "Just forget about it..."\_**

**\_ "Shut it!" I exclaimed, "I know you too well by now. You'll try to**

brush it off like it's nothing and then when your alone, you'll cry your eyes out. So tell me what I can do to prevent that!\_

—...—

\_"Speaking of islands, have you too decided where your going?"\_

\_"We decided to go on the Channel Islands National Parks. We specifically picked Santa Rosa Island because it has great wildlife, beautiful scenery, hiking/backpacking trails, and a lot of fun stuff to do. We would go to the beach, but Char refuses to anything water related."\_

\_"Alright, alright, so you have disagreements about what you want to do," mom intervened," but give me some insight on how you're getting to the island."\_

\_"Alright, so the drive from her to Santa Barbra is and hour and a half and the ferry, based on the schedule I printed out, should take at least 3 hours. After that, me and Char are going to settle at one of the camping sites. After that, we may start hiking around and take pictures of the wildlife, or in Char's case, sketch them, and if we make it to the beach, have lunch there. And if we still have time to kill, and I have my way, we can just chill out there and I can go snorkeling. By nightfall, we'll head back to our tent and sleep it off until tomorrow," Alaine concluded.\_

—...—

\_"Now how about you get on the boat I'll be up in a minute. I just need to make a quick pit stop at the bathroom."\_

—...—

\_"Who is this?" I exclaimed. My mind was 60 mph trying to find out if this was prank call and not who I think it is!\_

\_"Oh, no one, just a sexy lifeguard, who has a thing for beautiful Australian waitresses," the voice answered. I froze and my eyes widened.\_

—...—

\_"I curled my hand up and quickly dried myself before bolting out of the toilet, running as fast as my feet could take me. I made it to the docks, and saw the ferry sailing off into the distance.\_

\_"Now that's just bloody wonderful! Stupid bladder, stupid broken tap, and most of all, stupid Riley! Now what am I going to do?\_

\_"And then it hit me. I had a tail for Pete's sake! And it's a good thing I left my stuff with Alaine and I got my phone water-proofed!\_

—...—

\_"I swam leisurely through the kelp forest, carefully keeping tabs on the ferry at all times from below. It was so relaxing.I decided to go to the surface for air.\_

\_That's when I heard the most frightening sound known to man. A sound that stopped me in my tracks, or fins.\_

\_A Dolphin!\_

\_. . . \_

\_I turn to see a dolphin doing back flips and tricks right in front on us. My dolphin.\_

\_"Looks like we made a friend!" Alaine states.\_

\_"Yeah, it looks like we did," I smile.\_

\* \* \*

><p><strong><em>Present...<em>\*\*

\_\*\*Santa Rosa Island, Channal Islands, Southern California...\*\*\_

\*\*Charlotte's POV\*\*

After me and Alaine left the docks and walked off the pier, we started a hike up the beaches. I found it ironic how Alaine always picks a beach and wonder if she does it just to spite me.

Eventually, we asked for directions and found using the map the tourguide gave us more effective than following the other campers to different camp sites.

"So, before we left, did you get any idea on where we would be camping tonight? Because I know you and if we are here for the rest of the day, you know something," I said as I looked at her. She gave me a big smile.

"Easy, I did the math and all! So here's the plan:

We're heading to Water Canyon Beach and, if it helps, we can set up the tent in grass if it helps. We have to walk, like, 1.5 miles, which is pretty much a twenty minutes walk from the pier to there. So, far, we've been walking 10 minutes, so we're close. Then, once we get there we can set up the tent and eat lunch, depending on whether or not your going to join me. If not, then I'll ask someone to join me since there will be kayaking on the beach. After that, we'll have dinner and head to bed. Then, the next morning, we'll get dressed and head home.

So, how's that for a plan?" Alaine asked, looking like she just got praised for good behavior.

I rolled my eyes at her antics. "I think you have it planned out. Though I highly suggest that if you do pick someone to kayake with, I suggest you pick the guide. I would trust him more than a stranger."

"Is that because of they guys who beat you and Damon up?" she asked sincerely. I just gave her a look and she shut up right then and

there.

Ten minutes later, we found ourselves at the beach campsite. The sand was crisp, light and warm, no doubt by the sunny day, and the ocean seemed bluer than how it was when I swam here. Plus, there weren't many many people here, maybe 3-5 tents. Add in the noticable amount of space and there is a possibility of places to escape in case I get wet. Super! (Note the sarcasm...)

There was a sudden breeze of warm air and I smelled the sea salt that went with it. Ah, maybe now I can see why Al chose this place to camp.

We both looked at each other and smiled before heading down the ont the sand.

I picked a spot that was a reasonable distance from the water and made Alaine very happy in case she wanted to go for a swim.

"Hey, do you need help putting up the tent?" I asked as I saw Alaine taking our tent out and grabbed the instructions.

Alaine shook her head. "No thanks, but can you go and asks the tour guide when kayaking starts?"

I nodded. "Sure, just don't have too much fun without me."

I laughed as she poked her tongue at me before walking down the beach towards the instructor.

Not even 15 minutes later, I come back to help with the tent and nearly had to pick my jaw off the sand.

Right where a patch of sand used to be, was now a fully-pitched up tent.

"Alaine!"

She poked her head out of the tent and tried her absolute best to look poker faced at me. She failed and burst out laughing.

I couldn't help but laugh too as well.

"I though I told you to wait for me," I laughed as I walked towards the campsite. Alaine came out in her swim wear, a light blue, off-the-shoulder bikini with wide ruffles.

"You were taking too long and I got bored," Alaine whined, "so how long until it's time to go kayaking?"

"Well, you can mostly do it on your own, but with a guide, you should be okay. And you have 15 minutes, so put your clothes back on," I said.

Alaine shook her head. "Nope, I'm just gonna swim in the water for a little bit before leaving. Want to join me?"

Nope, I'm not gonna risk exposing my tail, thank you very much!

"No thanks, I'll just go for a walk with my art supplies and go for a



walk. I hear the flora and fauna are nice?" I said while I went to gather my stuff.

"Why don't you just stay here and draw until I leave. I'm sure the plants won't miss you," she insisted.

Rolling my eyes as I gathered my color pencils and sketchbook, I sat down on the sand and watched as Al went into the ocean.

I picked up a color pencil and started to draw Alaine in the water. I slowly started out with her figure. After that, I got lost in my work.

It's been awhile since I drew anyone, purely just for simple pleasures. The last time I drew for any particular reason, it had to be is on the when I saw Lewis on the beach that day.

\_\*\*Flashback...\*\*\_

\_I was walking down the beach as I was taking in the view of the coastal lines. I haven't had the time to see that much of Queensland since moving to the area, but I promised myself that my artistic inspiration should kick in soon enough.\_

\_With my sketchbook in hand, I started to walk down towards the beach when I saw Lewis sitting on the sand.\_

\_I felt a blush on my face when I remembered him at school. He was a cute guy, but it wasn't what drew me completely to him. In fact, it looked like he spent a little much time at the beach, since he didn't look pale, but not tan either, like his friend, Cleo. His blue eyes were mesmerizing in their own way, full of wisdom and knowledge.\_

\_A cute nerd, but possibly a really passionate one as well. I tried to keep my cool when he saw my japanese painting and complimented me and couldn't help but feel jolts going through my hand as I helped show him how to paint. I was weirded out when he said I helped him earlier, but was glad to help.\_

\_I just couldn't help but stare at him as he stared out at the sea. His previous happy face was now so sadden and moody. Never having a boyfriend before, I often watched people's expressions as to get a good idea on how they feel. And from how Lewis looked, he was pretty down in the dumps.\_

\_I wanted to see if he was okay, but it seemed like he didn't want to be bothered.\_

\_Suddenly, an idea popped into my head.\_

\_I walked a little closer behind him, hoping what I was about to do wasn't stalker-ish, and slowly opened my sketchbook before drawing with my heart's content.\_

\_I started out with the outline of his head, darting my eyes from from his face to the page, trying to get it right. After that, I started drawing his hair. Though it was usually longer, almost parted and almost past his eyes, but wind was making his hair look shorter and unruly.\_

\_I smiled to myself. Lewis with a haircut would really suit him.

-

\_Next was the facial features, like the ears, his nose, the little-barely noticeable- dimple on his chin, his freckles, and the hardest part, his eyes.\_

\_Drawing them wasn't the problem. It was capturing the emotion that was hard. So I had to try my best to capture his most saddened state and draw it on the paper.\_

\_When I was done, I looked down at my portrait and smiled. So close to the real thing that it could become real. \_

\_Feeling that I had overstayed my place, I quickly got up and walked away from him as quietly as I could.\_

\_I couldn't wait for Lewis to see it.\_

\*\*\_Flashback ends...\_\*\*

Coming out of my flashback, I looked up to see Alaine had already left. I let out a breath I was holding and looked down at the drawing.

I gasped.

If I thought my drawing of Lewis had been realistic, then I was definitely an amateur.

In this drawing of Alaine, it looked like I just snapped a picture and placed it on here.

Noting the use of color pencils, it looked too life-like to be an ordinary drawing. The details to the waves in the bathroom were deep blue, and yet, you could see through it if looked closely. The sun was shining with multiple layers of orange yellow and writing, each covering in different layers. And as for Alaine, it was too close to a life-drawing than an animation. Her smile of pure joy as she swam in the water was of innocence and happiness.

Looking closely at her, though I wasn't sure if it was my imagination or not, through the water...

I could have sworn I saw a tail on the lower portion of her body.

\* \* \*

><p>I didn't see Alaine until late. The sun was going down, resulting in a beautiful sunset and the waves were calm and serene, nice enough to draw even.<p>

I had left to go on a hike earlier and got a lot of interesting photos and drawings done while I was away.

Part of me spent most of the afternoon trying to forget what I saw, or rather, drew.

Maybe that sick, twisted part of me in the back of my mind probably

still thinks of that near-fatal night that Alaine nearly got turned. I mean, Alaine being a mermaid is still one of my most fatal nightmare to begin with. Maybe some part of me still desires to make Alaine like me for we could be on a more intimate level.

Right?

Or maybe just being nerve-wrecked about accidentally transforming on this trip is finally getting to me and the drawing was just a result of that.

That must be it. I'm nervous, that's all.

But the nagging feeling in my head is buzzing like crazy, but now is not the time.

When i got back, I looked ahead and saw that Alaine went to take another swim in the water. In fact, now that I think about it, Alaine had said something peculiar about her and swimming.

I walked over to the tent and put my stuff away before grabbing the cooler that held our late lunch/dinner. Looking inside to see 3 bottles of water in canteens and, possibly a curtesy of Alaine, chicken sandwiches with cake for dessert.

At least the canteens had straws on them, as a first.

I started eating as Alaine walked towards me.

"Before you even get \*\*close\*\*, go dry yourself off and come eat," I said, not looking at her. I could tell she was pouting before giving a snort and heading inside the tent.

Taking a bite out of the sandwich, I moaned in approval. Alaine living in my house did have some benefits.

Alaine came back out with her beach towel wrapped around her and her shirt back on. Her hair still looked damp, but nothing to worry about.

"So, how was kayaking? See any whales?" I asked in my most cheerful mood. At this, Alaine laughed.

"Nope, no whales. Though I swore I saw a shark following me for a second," she said casually. I nearly choked on my food, which lead to Alaine bursting out in gleeful laughter.

"A shark? Al, I thought I told you to stay with the guide!" I exclaime while trying to keep my dinner down.

"Hahahahahahahah! You should've have seen your face," Alaine doubled over in laughter, "well, to be fair, I did go with the guide. I also took some pictures out there. I told you I was leaving, but you were so immersed with your drawing that I was like 'BYE!' "

My mind wondered back to the drawing before I snapped myself out of it.

"Sorry about that, but I've just never had time to draw like I do now," I said earnestly.

"Really? Well, why don't you draw me?" she said before going into an out-stretched, ridiculous pose, "\_ 'Draw me like your french girls, Jack' \_".

Now it was time for me to burst out laughing.

"D-did yo-you j-just qu-quote \_Titanic\_?" I asked in fits of giggles. Alaine started laughing too until she started to hiccup.

We spent the rest of our evening talking and such until I looked at my phone and saw how late it was. With that, me and Alaine decided to call it a night and head inside the tent for some shut eyes.

Well, except for me.

\* \* \*

><p><em><strong>12:00 a.m.<strong>\_

I opened my eyes from my restless sleep and pulled out my phone to see the time.

12 o'clock. Well, I've been up earlier. I looked up beside me to see Alaine snoozing away, well, more like snoring away. We still had a few hours until it was time to get up.

Smirking to myself, I grabbed a beach towel and slowly yet quietly crept out of the tent before racing towards the beach. It was still dark out, but I wanted to go for a swim.

Alaine had her share of the ocean yesterday, so why can't I?

I took off my pants and placed them on the ground with my towel before rushing into the water.

The moment I sea-salt water touched my feet, I didn't even bother slowing down before I dove in head-first into the ocean.

It was almost instantly that I felt my tail form that I speed off into the sea. Surprisingly, it was very easy to see under the water. The moon was shining brightly, the waves were being surprisingly calm and I slowed down eventually to take the sights in.

God, I will never get used to the underwater view as a mermaid! I couldn't get enough of it before when I was in Australia, and I can't even get enough now!

I hoped I didn't swim too far from the campsite. Alaine doesn't need to wake up and have a search started over me.

I smiled to myself as I though it was a beautiful night, er, morning. I wasn't half-expecting to run into any whales or wild dolphins like I did before.

Feeling giddy, I tried my best not to start laughing. After all, it's not everyday someone gets over their fears. And I got over mine:

I'm no longer afraid of dolphins!

And unlike my failed attempt the first time, I successfully did it on my own.

Somewhere, in the back of my mind, I could see Lewis smiling if I told him. He would have been so proud.

But by the end of the day, I faced that fear for me.\*\* Not for him, not for Cleo, but for ME!\*\*

And now, I also made a new friend. I am officially no longer the mermaid afraid of dolphins!

Just at the though, I speedily swam into the open water, doing loopy-de-loops, somersaults, twirls, spins, and so much more!

I think I have Alaine to thank for this camping trip after all.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>READ & REVIEW!<strong>

End  
file.